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India Today April-May 1982 G.K.U.

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INDIA
TODAY
APRIL 15, 1982 Rs. 5.00
THE COMPLETE NEWSMAGAZINE

T. ANJIAH

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AKBAR AHMED

MANEKA GANDHI

ONGRESS (I)

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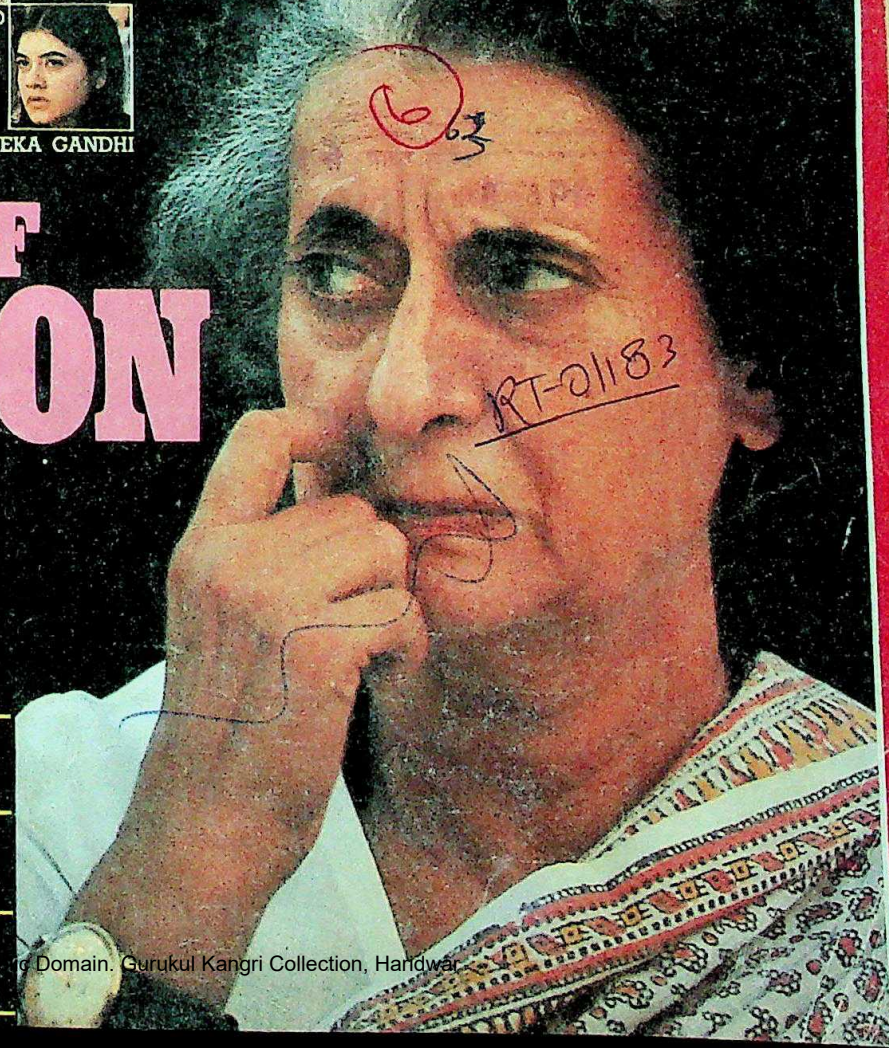

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FESTIVAL OF INDIA

BJP: IMAGE BUILDING

SELLING OF MUKTANANDA

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INDIA TODAY
The Complete Newsmagazine

Vol. VII No. 7
For the fortnight April 1–15, 1982

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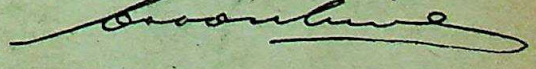
IN A RARE change from its usual media function of reporting the news, INDIA TODAY *last fortnight found itself featured in the news columns of the major newspapers of the country. The reason had nothing to do with the making of news—which it wasn't doing—but, appropriately enough, was symbolic of the development of journalism in the country. The occasion reported in the news columns of the dailies was the presentation ceremony of the first "Journalism for Human Rights" Award, jointly instituted by the People's Union for Civil Liberties (*PUCL*) and* INDIA TODAY, *to Swami Trivedi, 28, an upcoming free-lance reporter from Panna district in Madhya Pradesh.*

The award was the brain-child of Indian Express *Executive Editor Arun Shourie, also general secretary of* PUCL, *who featured on the cover of* INDIA TODAY *(December 15, 1981). Shourie at first sent a round robin circular to the editors of various journals and dailies asking if they would be interested in setting up such an annual award. Aware of the fact that it would be difficult to get a motley group of editors to agree on criteria for the award and its eventual winners,* INDIA TODAY *offered to adopt the award and put up the Rs 20,000 prize money entirely on its own. The offer was accepted and the* PUCL-INDIA TODAY *Journalism for Human Rights Award came into being.*

One of its main objectives is to give a strong push to investigative journalism, a field which is still in its infancy in India. It is a sapling that needs careful nurturing for it is growing in a hostile environment. The investigative reporter must battle not only the vested interests that are his prime target, cut through heavy layers of prejudice and superstition, and feel his way in a society cynically inured to wrongdoing, he must also contend with a calcified bureaucracy which thwarts him and a sluggish judicial system which is no guarantor of justice.

*In making the award for 1981 to Trivedi (*see Eye-catchers*), the seven-member jury was motivated as much by the human rights aspects of his story as the enormous difficulty of pursuing such reports in a remote corner of Madhya Pradesh. His exposé of police torture published in November 1981 in the weekly,* Sunday, *was a bold foray into hostile territory. As the citation for the award said: "It was not easy to do such a story in the backwoods of rural Madhya Pradesh. The risk of incurring the wrath of the powers that be was considerable. More credit therefore to Swami Trivedi that he persevered, building on earlier available information to piece together the full horror of what was being enacted in the name of preserving law and order."*

Trivedi should be an example to journalists throughout the country. The frontiers of Indian journalism are enlarged by all writing of this kind.



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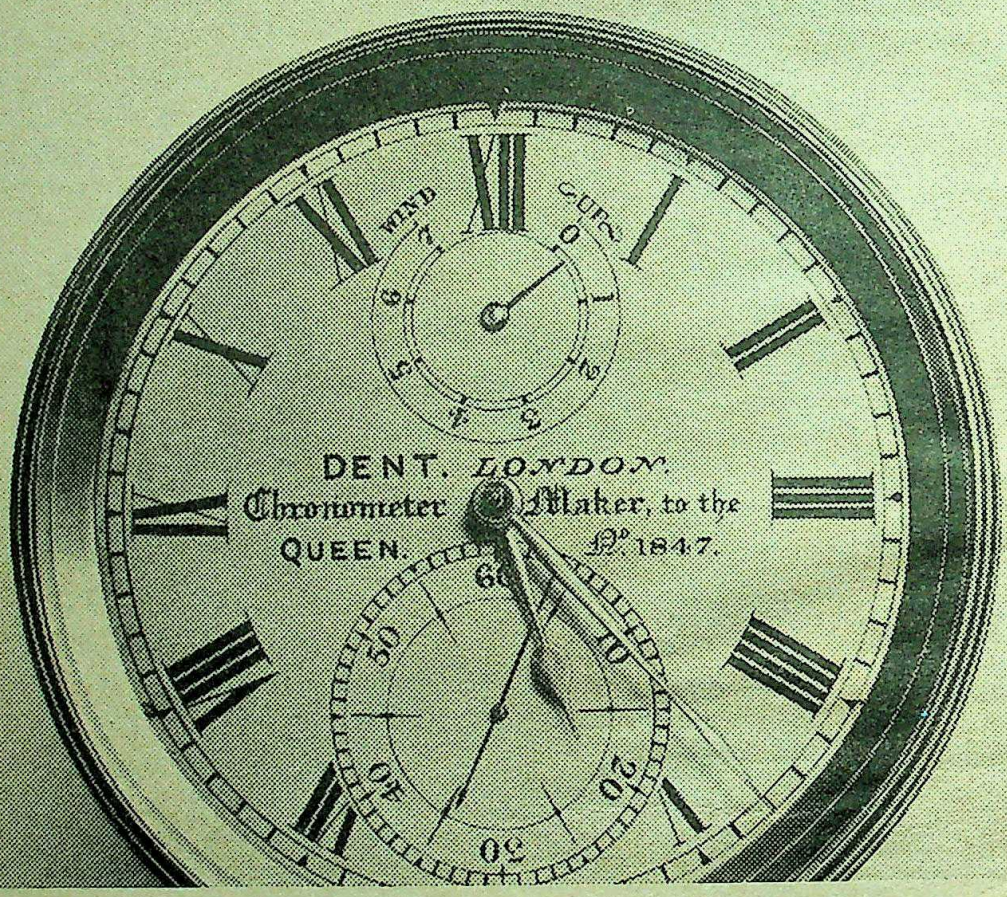

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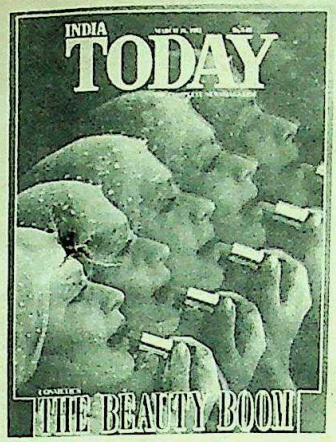

PAINT-REMOVER

"The Beauty Boom" (March 31) showed the extent of women's addiction to cosmetics. This reliance on beauty aids is dehumanising Indian women. And as if this were not bad enough, men too seam to have jumped onto the beauty bandwagon.

Hyderabad *N. Ramesh*

CHILLING ACCOUNT

"Operation Gangotri" (March 31) was the first detailed account of the Antarctica expedition that I have come across. The criticism of the expedition in the foreign media can be safely attributed to jealousy.

New Delhi *Arron Gurung*

THE REAL MEANING

After reading "An Uncivil Servant" (March 31) I feel that the IAS now stands for an Awkward Situation.

Chandigarh *R.K. Kapoor*

TAXING PUZZLE

The budget ("Flatter Than A Pancake", March 31) reminds me of the Rubik's Cube, with income tax, wealth tax, gift tax, estate duty, customs duty and excise forming the six faces. But arranging the colour on each face of the cube is easier than understanding the complexities of the tax structure.

Ahmedabad *Rajendra Balge*

STORM IN THE MOUNTAINS

The atmosphere and conditions prevailing in Sikkim were vividly captured in "The Sound Of Silence" (March 15). It becomes clear that the son of the former Chogyal has no right to make statements against India. Sikkim came into India's fold voluntarily and has no right to secede.

Shillong *Rahul Chandrawarkar*

It was the Lepchas who put the first Chogyal on the throne of Sikkim 300 years ago. Today we no longer support the monarchy and in fact, we condemn the institution which enslaved us for three centuries.

Gangtok *Rongkup Lepcha*

■ The article read like something Macaulay could have written and which we Indians condemn. The people of Sikkim have been catagorised as "naive". The British said worse things about us and that didn't stop us in our struggle for Independence. To me the Indian army surrounding the former Chogyal's palace and putting him under arrest seems very much like an invasion. If any other country had done it we would have had to read volumes on the injustice. But in this case—long live the neocolonialists!

Trivandrum *A.P. Prem Kumar*

■ It seems that the author took every baku-wearing person to be a Sikkimese. He overlooked the fact that the people interested in maintaining the status quo in Sikkim are the Tibetans. They have already played havoc in Bhutan and Nepal and Sikkim is their new pasture.

Gangtok *Kunga Wangchuk*

COMPLETELY STUMPED

The article, "Plunder Blunder" (March 15) is one of the most enlightened pieces I have read in INDIA TODAY. Considering the magnitude of the problems that are caused by indiscriminate deforestation, I think you should have put this article on the cover. By not doing so, you have shown that you too do not take the problem seriously enough.

Madras *C.T. Vairavan*

■ We must decide now if we want to continue our colonial policy towards forests whereby the forests exist solely to provide raw materials for industries which benefit upper-income groups or we revive the primary function of forests—protecting and enriching the soil, conserving water and providing food.

Dhangaddi (Nepal) *Sunderlal Bahuguna*

■ It's time the forest departments woke up to their responsibilities. The scenario potrayed in the article is not going to be in the distant future. It will happen sooner than we think and we must deal with the problems urgently.

Paradip Port *Bhaskar Parichha*

■ Ninan's illustration at the start of the article had as much impact as the article itself. The feature itself was excellent and with it INDIA TODAY has widened the vista of Indian journalism.

Korimerla *Raveendra Nath*

BE INDIAN

Though INDIA TODAY has the best design and printing of any Indian magazine, it is nevertheless a blind imitation of other American newsmagazines. Anyway, the changes in the March 31 issue are welcome.

Munnar *K. Krishnamurthy*

BUY INDIAN

I was shocked to read in "Stalling Tactics" (March 15) that foreign cars are being bought for the use of VIPs coming to the Asian Games. What is wrong with cars manufactured in this country? And can't the Government find better use for our fast-dwindling foreign exchange reserves? With the Government setting this example how can we expect the average citizen to buy Indian.

Jamnagar *Dr Bipin Sanghvi*

DOWN MEMORY LANE

Noorjehan brought back with her the good old days of Indian music and cinema ("Once More With Feeling", March 15). For most of us, her visit brought back the melody which had been lost with the Partition

Madras *Shamsher B. Singh*

■ This magazine is the only one which has correctly guessed the age of Noorjehan. I had seen her half a century ago when she was a "baby" of my age. Today I am 59.

Gandhidham *K.N. Matai*

THE REAL CREDIT

In the article on Adoor Gopalakrishnan ("Filming Mice And Men", March 15) it has been said that it was Gopalakrishnan's film *Swayamvaram*, made in 1972, that put Kerala on the cinematic map of India. In fact, the credit goes to the late Ramu Kariat's classic *Chemmeen*, which was made in 1966–67.

Palghat *K.Natarajan*

JET LAG

The article on Calicut airport ("High Hopes", March 15) is a glaring example of the stepmotherly treatment meted out to the south. There are eight airports serviced by Indian Airlines in Gujarat. This, while all four of the southern states have only 13 airports between them. We have waited for 30 years and now they talk of Vayudoot!

Calicut *Tom Mookken*

BANKING ON THE PARTY

The article "Jobs For The Boys" (March 15) was a brave exposition. It is alarming that party politics has even crept into our financial institutions. At this rate any influential member of the ruling party will be able to get away with anything while those in genuine need will get nothing.

Calcutta *Ratanlal Doogar*

■ The article is extremely biased. What is wrong with the Congress(I) appointing its

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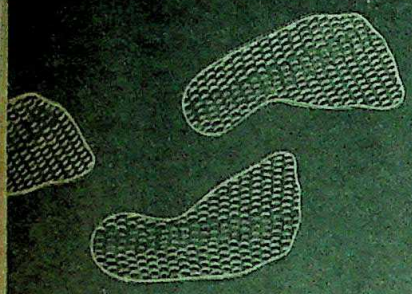
Footprints on the fashion front



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own men to the boards of nationalised banks if they are competent? In any democracy it is natural that the ruling party will try to put its own men in such positions. The so-called professionals, for whom INDIA TODAY has raised its voice, are almost all anti-Congress(I) and in fact, anti-government.

Madras *V.R. Chandran* General Secretary, Madras Congress(I) Committee

MARIE STOPES

The article "Removing The Trauma" (March 15) should be an eye-opener to the Government-run family planning centres. It is no wonder that many people feel that it is preferable to have children rather than go through an ordeal at the Family Planning Association of India's (FPAI) clinics. The FPAI clinics are unhygenic and the staff is badly trained. We hope that the FPAI takes a cue from the Marie Stopes clinics.

Ahmedabad *J.V. Venkatesh Murthy*
Jayashree V. Murthy

■ The article is either naive or dangerously subtle in its message. It goes on the supposition that as India has a population problem coupled with poverty, abortion is the only answer. This is not so. As the last paragraph states most of the clients of Marie Stopes clinic are unmarried women of the upper and middle classes. Detraumatising abortions for them does not help solve India's population problem—it only acts as an incentive for lax morals. The article says that Japan halved its birth rate through abortions. Why didn't it quote what the USSR, the country with the highest aboration rate, discovered? They have found that women who terminate their first pregnancy severely damage their health and that chances are that they are unable to complete any subsequent pregnancy. Also they found that 20 per cent of women who terminate their pregnancy suffer from chronic inflamation of the sexual organs, 36 per cent become chronically ill and 8 per cent become infertile.

New Delhi *Maria Waples*

EYE TO SELBOURNE

For all David Selbourne's intuitive feel for the Indian ethos, he slips up on his reading of the Hindu psyche ("The Importance Of India," March 15). The Hindu is a chaotic individual but has learnt to keep his conflicts within a rigid frame. And the frame is sacrosanct. The caste system is a good example. And parliamentary democracy is now part of this holy cow. Selbourne means well and his syntax is exciting, but that's about all.

New Delhi *P. Narayanan*

INDIA TODAY
The Complete Newsmagazine

Readership Survey

Dear Reader,

In the first five years of INDIA TODAY's existence there have been rapid and radical changes in the media scene. It is time to make an assessment of how INDIA TODAY readers perceive the magazine.

We have specially commissioned Indian Market Research Bureau to conduct a sample survey amongst our readers. Following a systematic random selection process a questionnaire will appear in some of the copies in this issue.

I would personally be grateful if you could fill in the questionnaire and mail it in the pre-paid envelope. Your response will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Aroon Purie
Editor

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COVER STORY: Even as Mrs Indira Gandhi was busy propogating India's image in Britain last fortnight, her own monolithic Congress(I) was displaying visible tremors of tension. Suddenly, the multiple problems that have plagued the party seemed to be coming to a boil and Mrs Gandhi could find herself saddled with some unpleasant disciplinary decisions. Above all, there were signs that Mrs Gandhi was losing her grip. An analysis of the current crisis. **Page: 14**

SPECIAL REPORT: The two-year-old Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has grown like Jack's beanstalk, and is now projecting itself as a 'national alternative'. But the party has sprouted a progressive branch that threatens to tilt it away from its old, orthodox Jana Sangh tradition. An in-depth analysis, with party strongman A.B. Vajpayee's problems and a compendium of the BJP's political wisdom. **Page: 87**

INVESTIGATION: Drug abuse and its attendant evils has always been regarded as a problem afflicting more affluent western countries. However, there are pockets in India where drug-taking is a way of life and the poison has already started taking its toll. In one particular belt in Punjab, the problem is fast assuming dangerous proportions. **Page: 80**

SPECIAL FEATURE: The much-awaited Festival of India opened with a trumpet fanfare, last fortnight at the Royal Festival Hall in London. To add the right note to the occasion were a galaxy of Indian musicians who followed Prime Ministers Mrs Indira Gandhi, Mrs Margaret Thatcher and Prince Charles, in opening the festival doors to the public. A review of the grand spectacle with colour photographs. **Page: 55**

RELIGION: It was hard sell at its peak. And the product in question was the newest package of supermarket spirituality to hit the country-Swami Muktananda Paramahansa, 73-year-old siddha-yogi-turned western-style godman. With a 2.5 lakh foreign following and 5 lakh domestic disciples, the swami, in the process of choosing a successor is determined to launch himself on a grand scale. **Page: 132**

THE ARTS: It is by far the largest art show India has held, at a cost of Rs 15.5 lakh and with 76 participating countries. The Fifth Triennale, held at the vast Exhibition Hall of New Delhi's Pragati Maidan, has brought in a wide array of artists and sculptors from all over the world. But, for a show of this size, not everything is well. A special report on the show. **Page: 140**

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Extracts from the statement of Mr. N. M. Desai, Chairman, Larsen & Toubro Limited

Thirty-Seventh Annual General Meeting on Monday, March 29, 1982

The 37th Annual Report to the shareholders is for a six-month period commencing 1st April 1981, as the Company's accounting year ending 31st March has been changed to 30th September for operational and administrative reasons.

The working results of the Company for the period under review have been very satisfactory with sales, order booking and profits showing a marked improvement over the corresponding period of the previous year.

The Indian economy has suffered a considerable setback due to the large increase in the cost of imports. With the declining foreign exchange reserves, the progress in implementation of the development plans would have to be slowed down. The recently sanctioned IMF loan will provide timely assistance and aid our economic growth.

The efforts made by the Government to tone up the infrastructure have yielded good results and production of critical items such as coal, steel, cement and crude oil has been stepped up. There is a likelihood of an 8% growth in industrial production.

Although power generation has risen by 15%, its availability to the consumer continues to be uncertain and gives cause for concern.

SALES

Sales for the six-month period amounted to Rs. 82.6 crores (US $ 91.8 million) as against Rs. 60.9 crores (US $ 67.7 million) in the same period of the previous year—an increase of 36%.

Order booking at Rs. 119 crores (US $ 132.2 million) for the same period was higher as compared to the corresponding period of the previous year by 39%. The order backlog stood at Rs. 164.1 crores (US $ 182.3 million).

The consolidated group turnover for the six-month period amounted to Rs. 128 crores (US $ 142 million) as against Rs. 203 crores (US $ 226 million) in the 12 months of the previous year.

EXPORTS

Due to the recessionary situation prevailing abroad, the engineering industry continued to face difficulties. In the light of the urgency to increase India's exports, there is a need for Government to review the export development policy and to provide better fiscal incentives.

PRODUCTION

Production for the six-month period at sale value amounted to Rs. 66.2 crores (US $ 73 million).

Tool manufacturing, which is critical for our switchgear production, has been augmented by the installation of additional high precision equipment.

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The hydraulic excavators manufactured in collaboration with POCLAIN S.A., France have gained good customer acceptance. **60% of the orders received in the six months ended September 1981, were repeat orders. During the year we increased our production by 80%.** A separate factory for the manufacture of hydraulic components is under construction at Bangalore and production is expected to commence in 1983.

We manufactured the rocket motor casing used in ROHINI-II satellite which was launched in May, 1981.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The process design developed by our R&D centre through computer simulation and pilot plant trials, enabled us to secure a prestigious order for an ammonium chloride crystallisation plant of 10 tons per hour capacity. We received this order in the face of keen international competition. Good progress is being made in technology absorption and development of new processes and products. Our switchgear R&D laboratory has acquired a sophisticated 1000 channel data logger for analysis and working on multi-parameters. A storage oscilloscope has also been added.

FINANCE

The Company has received the sanction from the Controller of Capital Issues for the issue of bonus shares in the proportion of 3 shares for every 5 existing equity shares. These shares will be allotted by end-February 1982 and will qualify for full dividend for the period under review. The issued and paid-up capital will consequently increase to Rs. 24.2 crores (US $ 26.9 million).

PROSPECTS

Unless urgent steps are taken to bring about a better industrial relations climate in the country, conducive to increasing production, industrial growth will be hampered.

Inherent in the task of achieving growth with profitability is the need for improved technology, good quality, better productivity and effective cost control. L&T has these capabilities and consequently has been able to achieve a 20% rate of compound growth in profits before tax over the last five years.

The improvement in the Company's cash flow and funds generation has made it possible to undertake major expansion and diversification projects. Additional investment is planned and applications for Government approvals are being submitted. **In the light of Government's wish that MRTP houses should be more self-reliant in meeting the requirements of finance to implement new projects, relief from Government through lower rates of corporate taxes and enhanced tax concessions for re-investment of profits is needed.**

Although the shipping industry is subject to fluctuations in freight rates, the bulk carrier trade has proved to be profitable. Inspite of the decline in freight rates since the beginning of 1981, the Government is keen that Indian shipping tonnage should increase. There is therefore, a good deal of interest on the part of the larger companies to invest in this industry. It is believed that the recessionary situation in world trade would not continue beyond 1982 and that the freight markets would revive by 1983. This opinion is supported by the fact that international ship owners are also continuing to add tonnage.

With the increasing demand for the Company's products and our ability to meet customer needs for better quality and improved design through technology development, there is reason to expect that the Company's operations and working results would show significant progress. Our efforts to develop the human resources in our organisation and to create positive attitudes to work achievement, are gaining success.

I am confident that we will be able to avail of the emerging opportunities.

I wish to thank my colleagues on the Board and the employees for their support and valuable services rendered throughout the year.

This does not purport to be a report of the proceedings of the Annual General Meeting.

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TO MOSCOW VIA DELHI

PRIME Minister Indira Gandhi's proposed visit to Saudi Arabia beginning April 17, 1982 will, besides turning a new leaf in Indo-Saudia relations, mark a major diplomatic initiative to open channels between Riyadh and Moscow. The Saudi royal family had been in the past few months wanting to come closer to the Russians in a big way and they preferred to do it through New Delhi. The Saudi king is uneasy with the prevailing situation in the Gulf and feels that his military force and entire administration is dominated by the Americans.

With the growing Soviet influence in Iran and the Russians' continued presence in Afghanistan, the Saudis are edging closer to friends of Russia. Mrs Gandhi's visit is also expected to increase the flow of Saudi money into India and try to counter-balance the Saudi-Pak axis.

FROM FILMS TO POLITICS

LAST fortnight, Telugu film star N.T. Rama Rao entered politics by announcing the formation of a regional party in Andhra Pradesh. Quite soon it will be Karnataka's turn to bring cinema into politics. With a mid-term poll around the corner, Raj Kumar, the ageing Kannada matinée idol, is reportedly planning to take the plunge soon. Kumar may join up with former revenue minister S. Bangarappa—Chief Minister Gundu Rao's bugbear—who has been suffering in silence with the Congress(I) high command scarcely noticing him after his controversial resignation from Rao's cabinet last year. This seems to be another case of blood being thicker than power in politics: Kumar and Bangarappa come from the same caste group—Edigas. The two may join hands with former Karnataka chief minister Devraj Urs and may form a party which could prove a strong threat to the ruling party in the coming elections.

(From left) Rama Rao, Kumar and Bangarappa: political intrigue

A SCRAMBLE FOR POWER

WITH a snap poll dominating drawing-room chatter in Karnataka, the Pradesh Congress Committee(I) presidentship has now become the gleam in every ruling party member's eye. KPCC(I) Chief K.T. Rathod and Chief Minister Gundu Rao have been at each other's throat for several months. Rathod seems to have cooked his goose recently by issuing show cause notices to the three PCC(I) general secretaries—Prem Kumar, Keshava Murthy and D.B. Kalmankar—all yes-men of the chief minister. Two of Rao's cabinet ministers—Veerappa Moily, finance, and Dharam Singh, housing, are reportedly vying for the state Congress presidency. They are said to be ready to give up their ministerships because, in the event of an election, the post will make them all powerful. A decision on Rathod's successor is expected soon.

Rao (left) and Rathod: raising hackles

PLAYING DIPLOMATIC GAMES

PAKISTAN seems to be playing some deep game over the return of the pro-Khalistan group who hijacked an Indian Airlines Boeing to Lahore last September. Soon after the hijacking took place, General Zia assured the Indian Government that the hijackers would be returned to India after interrogation for trial in Indian courts. Since then, the Indian Government has made a number of inquiries but the Pakistan Government has been stalling over the issue. Recently, the Indian Government received authentic information that interrogation of the hijackers had been completed some time ago and once again asked for their return only to be told that the interrogation was still continuing. Obviously, the Pakistan Government is holding the hijackers in reserve as a bargaining lever in case it is ever required.

UNIFORM POLICY

A few opposition members of Parliament have mounted pressure on the Defence Ministry to invite senior uniformed defence personnel to participate in the meetings of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee attached to the ministry. Recently, an opposition member reiterated the demand in a committee meeting presided over by Defence Minister R. Venkataraman.

But before the defence minister could reply to the demand Rajiv Gandhi spoke out. He vehemently opposed the opposition proposal, arguing that service personnel should not be exposed to the searching questions asked by politicians. Rajiv's forceful argument was promptly accepted by the other memebers of the committee and the request was shot down. The only people connected with the services to face the MPs will continue to be civil servants such as the defence secretary.

SUMMER TRIP TO MOSCOW

MRS GANDHI is likely to visit Moscow in the near future. According to reliable sources, Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev has urged Mrs Gandhi to pay a visit to Moscow. Brezhnev's invitation was contained in the personal letter he sent through Soviet Defence Minister Marshal Dmitir Ustinov who visited India last fortnight. According to the sources, Mrs Gandhi in her reply has stated that she would be delighted to accept the invitation, probably for the coming summer.

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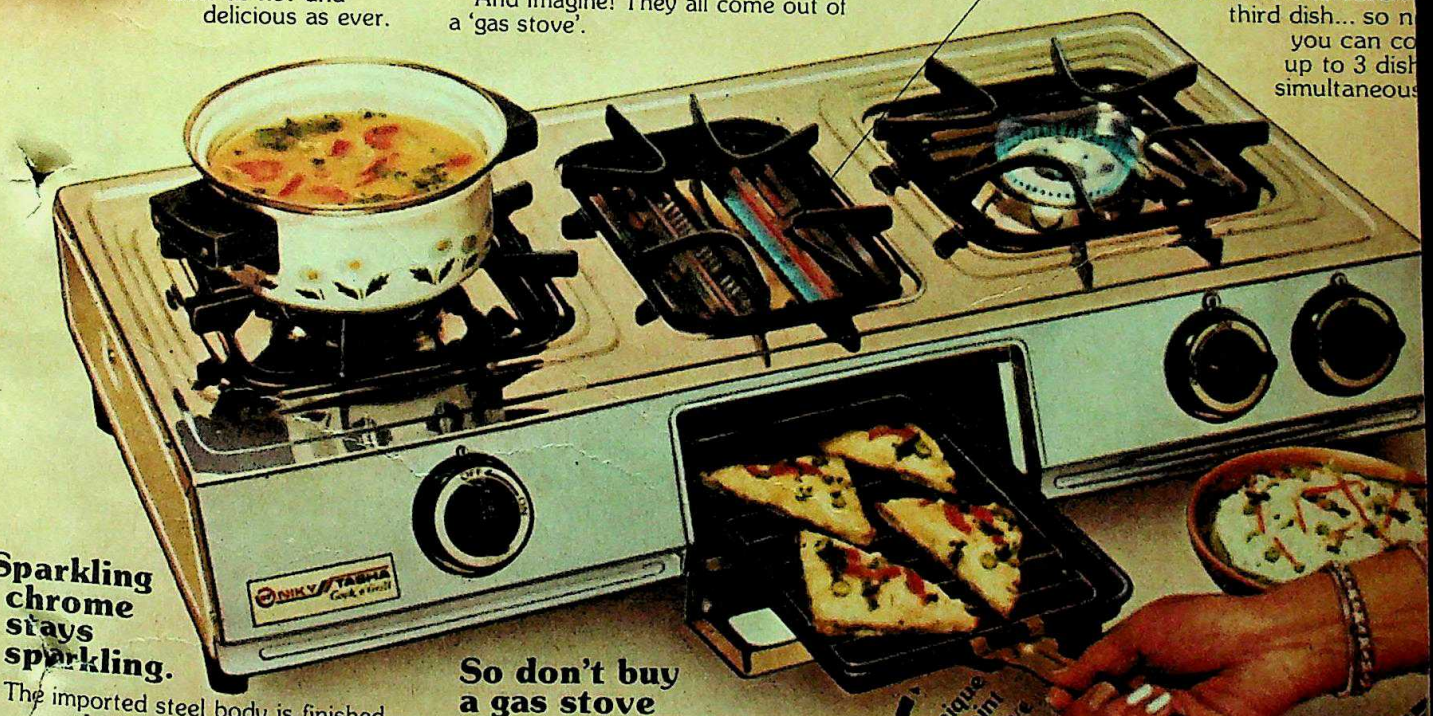

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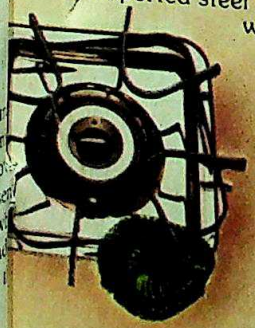

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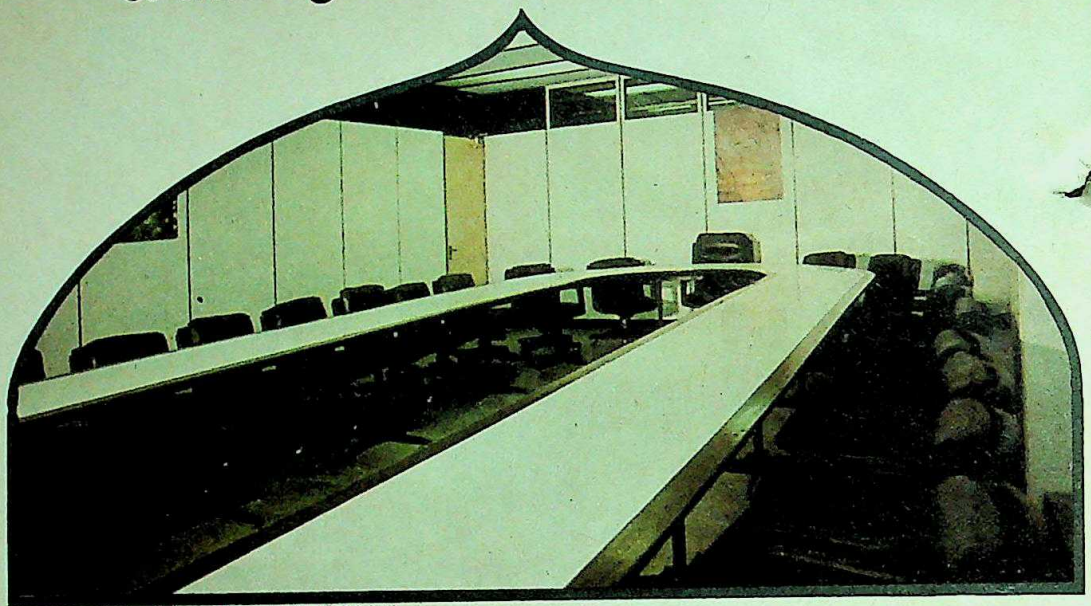

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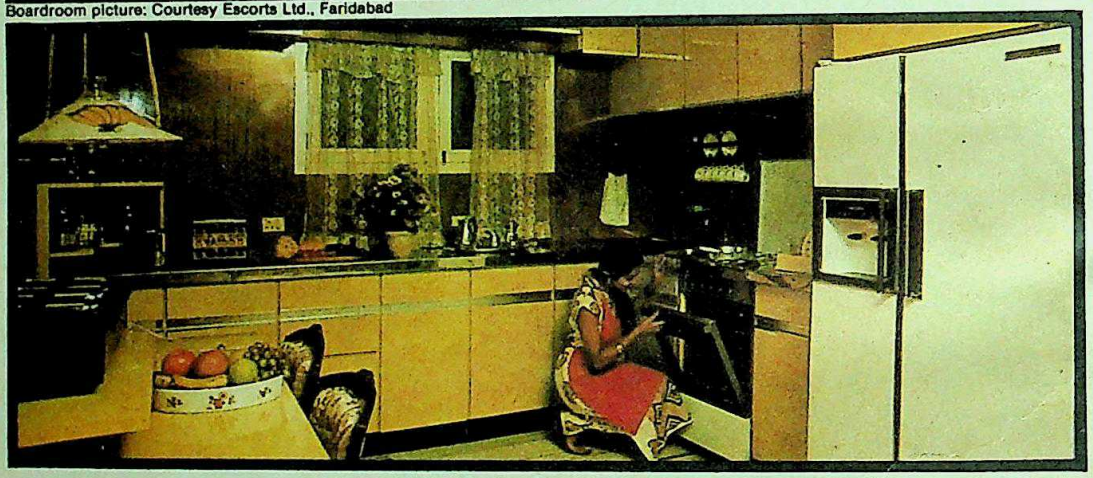

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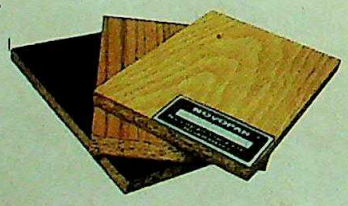

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» Five years ago many feared Mrs (Indira) Gandhi as Durga. Today they see her as the papier mache one. True they make much of the idol. But that is only because in our times such exhibitionist religiosity is profitable.

—*Arun Shourie in the* Indian Express

» A woman (Mrs Gandhi) of rare poise and rare courage and as one whose instincts are basically right, but which unfortunately she will not allow herself to trust.

—*S.M. in the* Indian Express

» Somebody might ask me which rules make the provision to provide coffee to you.

—*Karnataka Chief Minister, R. Gundu Rao to newsmen when asked about favouritism shown towards cement allotees*

» (Just) as the politician has to struggle hard to manipulate, manoeuvre to outbid his opponents and rivals, so does the press.

—*Editorial comment in* Current

» There is no Khalistan.

—*Union Home Minister, Zail Singh in* Weekend Review

» She (Mrs Gandhi) is dismissing chief ministers as though they are daily wage workers.

—*Devraj Urs at a public meeting in Karnataka*

» You can see there are a lot of things to be done in our country. If you are not strong and you are in my position you cannot achieve such goals.

—*Mrs Indira Gandhi to a foreign journalist*

» How long can the Government wave the *danda* to stop people misbehaving?... It would seem that as a nation the only thing that we fear and respect is the *danda*. So why not... elevate it to the status of divinity: *danda devta!*

—*Khushwant Singh in* The Hindustan Times

» He (Sanjay Gandhi) was a revolutionary ... Rajiv doesn't have the calibre. Of course he will make an ideal prime minister like his mother. But India doesn't need prime ministers, it needs revolutionaries.

—*I.S. Johar, comedian, in* Onlooker

Laxman in The Times of India

The false allegations levelled against us by the irresponsible press have all come true

» I am not against (Babasaheb) Bhosale. He's such a sweet and simple man.

—*Rusi Karanjia,* Blitz *editor in* Bombay

» Mrs Gandhi remains inexplicably ambivalent about the reality of the power she now legitimately enjoys. She seems reluctant to believe in that reality and consequently is unable to turn it to account her own and the nation's.

—*N.J. Nanporia in* Business World

» The entire style of functioning within the Congress(I) has generated not an awareness of the need for urgency on the question of succession, but an avalanche of sychophancy.

—*Editorial comment in* Mainstream

» I think I am a very boring person really. I don't think I am particularly sensual.

—*Film star Zeenat Aman in* Super

» I feal shattered. I have still not lost faith in him (Dilip Kumar)... He has promised to divorce the other woman soon, in the very near future.

—*Film star Saira Banu, on her husband's second marriage to Asma in* Current

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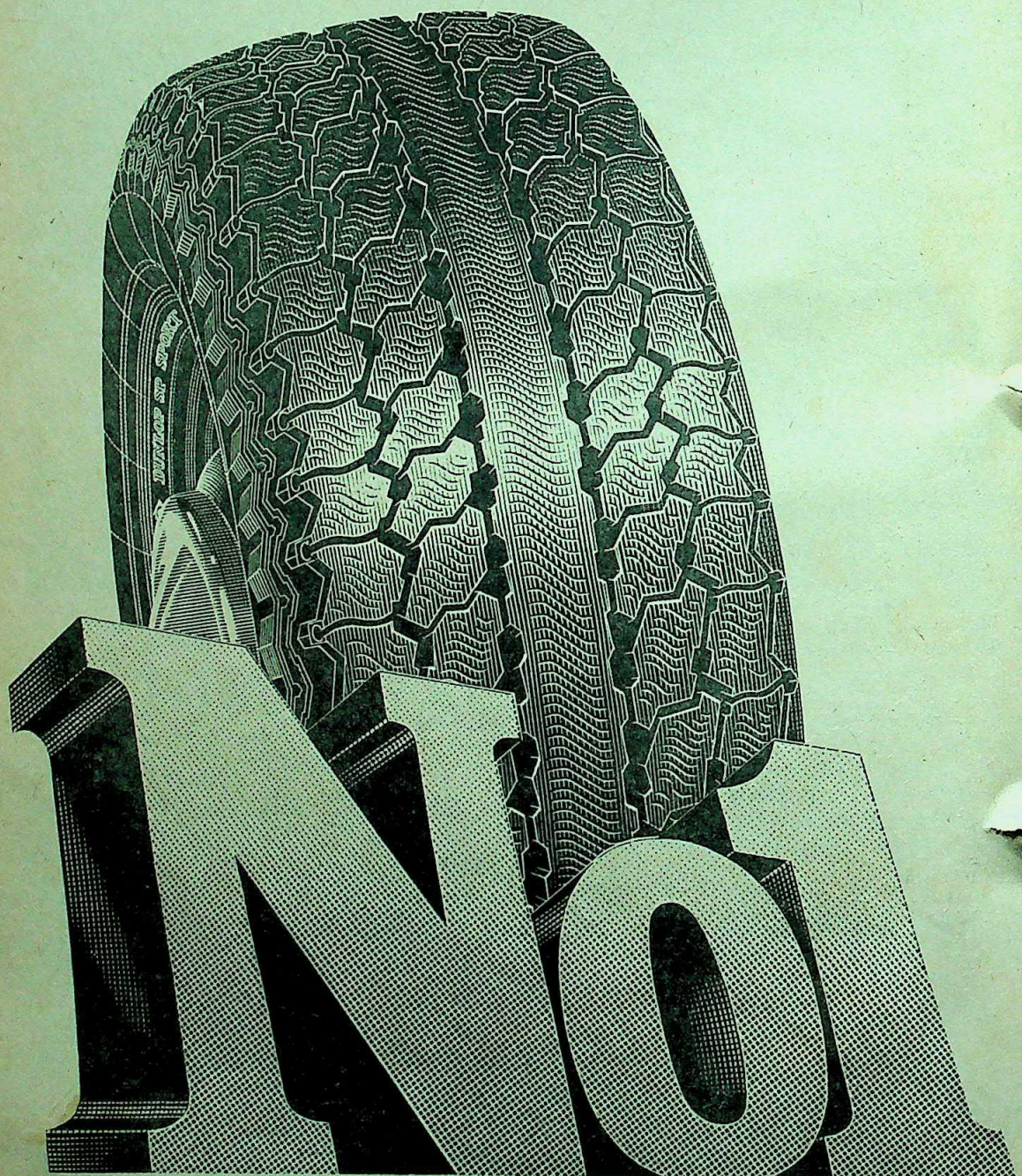

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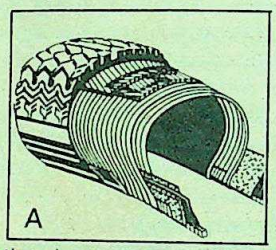
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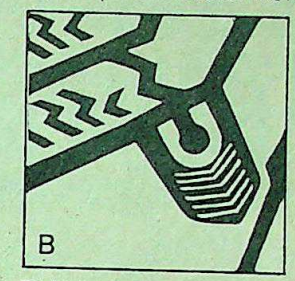
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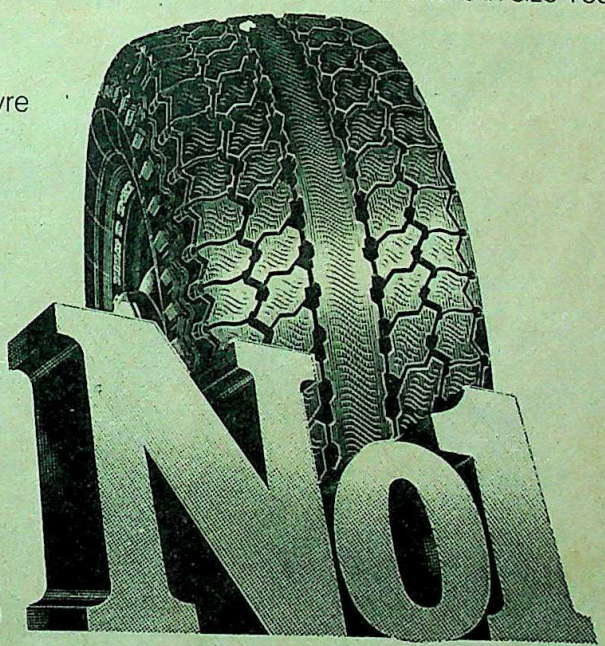

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CONGRESS(I)

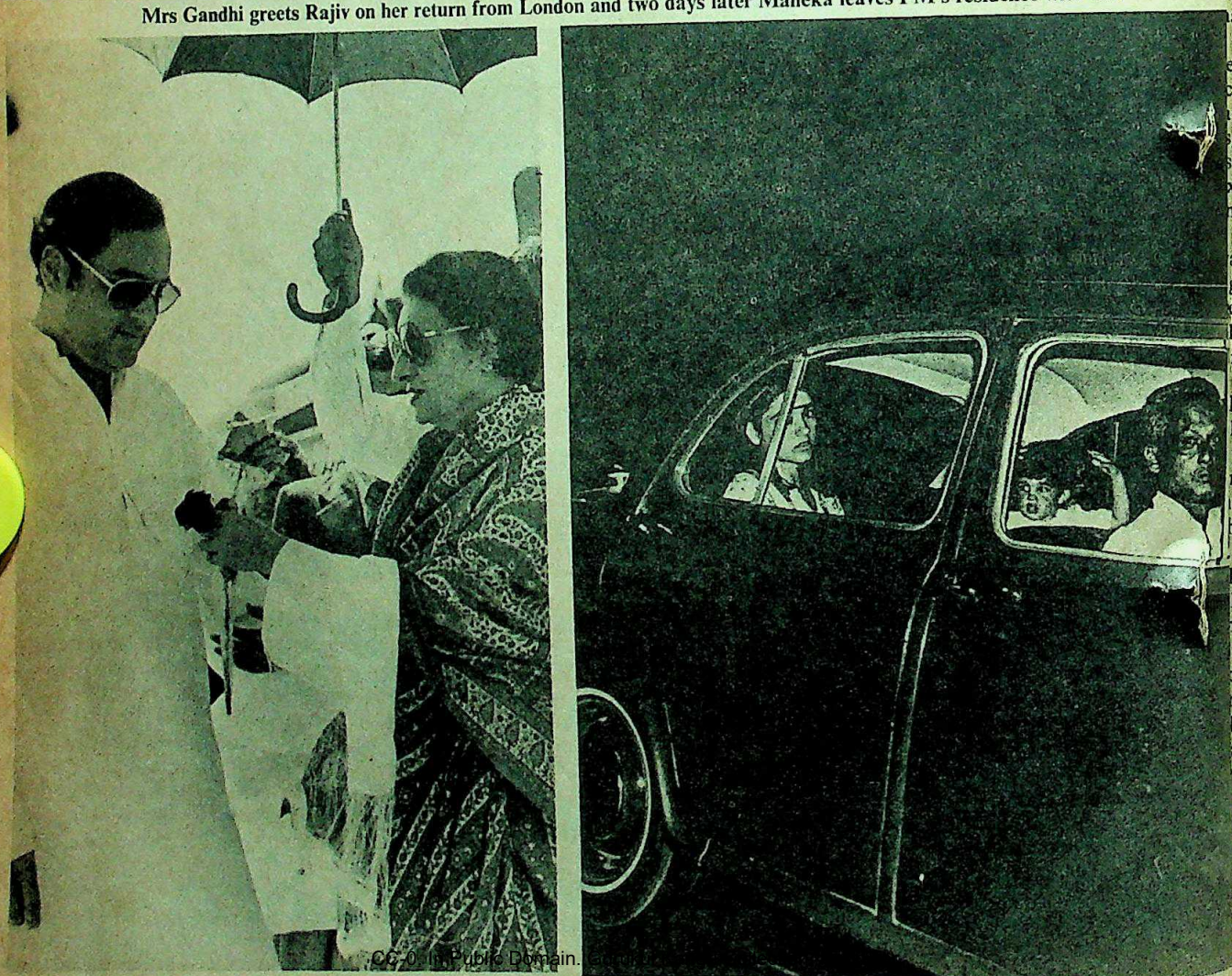
TREMORS OF TENSION

THE CONTRAST could not have been more heightened. Riding a wave of pomp and circumstance in London, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi winged her way back home last fortnight to the embrace of a party—and family—quaking with tremors of tension. Not all the glamour of the Festival of India could overshadow the stark fact that, for the first time since she stormed back to power in 1980, Mrs Gandhi's hold on the Congress(I) was far from firm. For the 64-year-old leader, slight of body but suffused with power, the ecstasy of a red carpet overseas welcome was darkened by a gloomy if embittered home-coming.

Simmering grievances had seemingly erupted everywhere, inside the guarded privacy of her home and outside in the ranks of the political arena. The decision of Maneka, her impetuously gutsy, politically ambitious widowed daughter-in-law to address a convention in Lucknow against her wish seemed to take the lid off finally on growing family strains that had been bypassed earlier. Maneka Gandhi's outburst came for Mrs Gandhi as no surprise; but even the most casual onlooker could not miss the situation fraught with terrible iron. Four years ago, she had hobbled out of the political firing line on crutches supplied by her son Sanjay; today the son's wife has stepped out to unfurl the banner of revolt in Sanjay's name. For a woman who once forsook an election rather than lose a son, it wasn't merely a question of now losing a daughter-in-law. It was a direct challenge to her and anointed heir Rajiv.

Akbar Ahmed, Sanjay's old school buddy who called the Lucknow convention did so by acknowledging Mrs Gandhi as the leader and saying that it was a tribute

Mrs Gandhi greets Rajiv on her return from London and two days later Maneka leaves PM's residence with son



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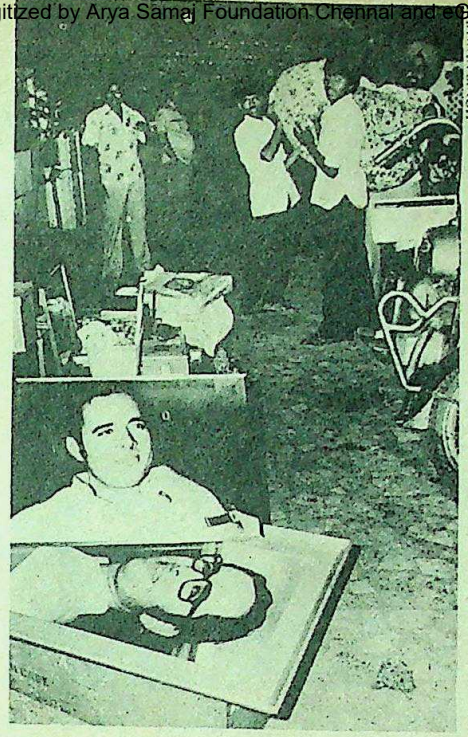
Sanjay. But clearly Mrs Gandhi did not see it that way. Stepping off the plane at Palam Airport she called it "an anti-party act", briskly charging the convention's organisers—including her daughter-in-law—with collaborating with her arch political rival, the Rashtriya Swyamsewak Sangh (RSS). "What is especially sad," she concluded, "is that some people who are supposed to have been close to Sanjay are now combining with forces who did everything to destroy him and his image."

Both the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the RSS denied the charge, with Madho Prasad Tripathi, president of the BJP's Uttar Pradesh unit describing Mrs Gandhi's accusation as "ridiculous". Maneka herself, in her short speech at Lucknow, rebutted the accusation forcefully. When newsmen tried to pin Ahmed down by pointing at the close relation between him and Vasundhara Raje, the daughter of BJP leader Vijaya Raje Scindia, he snapped: "Isn't Vasundhara the sister of the Congress(I) MP, Madhav Rao, also?" However, BJP involvement in the Lucknow convention was nowhere visible, and some of its leaders were obviously chuckling at Mrs Gandhi's discomfiture and basking in the unexpected credit.

Experiences: Dilemma though it was, the Lucknow meeting was only the most recent of experiences to come Mrs Gandhi's way. In Bombay, Abdul Rehman Antulay, disgraced former chief minister of Maharashtra, was calmly refusing to be subdued, flexing his muscles, mustering ranks of personally loyal followers in stubborn defiance of Mrs Gandhi's wishes. A stone's throw away stood Babasaheb Bhosale, a luckless, tragicomic figure splayed clumsily on the chief minister's gaddi, a festering refutation of her supposedly unerring instinct for the political pulse.

In nearby Andhra Pradesh, a political peer like T. Anjiah, who was as surprised by his elevation as chief minister in 1980 as he was taken aback by his dismissal last month, summoned up enough courage to contemplate—but not go through with—forming a new breakaway party. Yet, his fellow Congress(I) legislators earlier took with precedence when they declined to follow hook, line and sinker his successor nominated in New Delhi.

In the capital, meanwhile, the usual chaos which attends the tortuous process of allotting party tickets for elections—this time for the Rajya Sabha—acquired a touch of the absurd as candidates came on the list and fell off, or the other way round, in the twinkling of an eyelid. Two ministers were made to eat humble pie when they were unceremoniously, and very rudely, dropped from the list altogether. And, for the umpteenth time, the All India Congress Committee-I (AICC-I) failed to meet in the capital.



PRAWAN SINGH

Maneka's belongings at mother's house: thrown out?

Loosening Grip: Seldom before had the Congress(I) been on such an epileptic totter; never before had its line of command been so repeatedly called into question. Earlier, in the late '60s, when Mrs Gandhi's authority was challenged, she promptly split the party, went to the people, swept the 1971 polls, and built up an organisation from scratch. Again, in 1977-78, there was desertion in the ranks, basically a spin-off from her electoral reverses in 1977 and the dominance of Sanjay. She split the party again and won handsomely in the bargain, thus proving for the second time that in India's political roulette the odds were perpetually stacked in favour of the Gandhis.

But now, the Congress(I), even though it has the first person singular emblazoned in parentheses, is again vibrating to new tremors of tension, her grip loosening. It has been reduced to a fumbling, amorphous, slothful and groping leviathan—a bird-brained monster whose powerful limbs reach in all directions but refuse to coordinate. It has neither the rowdy exuberance of its Sanjay Gandhi heydays nor the steadfast firmness and sense of purpose Mrs Gandhi gave it in the early '70s.

Even with the party securely ensconced in 2,300 of the country's 3,200 Assembly seats and a bulldozing majority of 354 seats out of 524 in the Lok Sabha the Congress(I) is today a giant in palsy. The show goes on without a duly elected AICC(I), without any Pradesh Congress Committee-I (PCC-I) properly elected at the state level, and without any legally constituted district or block level organisation. As the ultimate in one-man bands, the party starts and ends with the person of Mrs Gandhi, a lonely figure surrounded by a clutch of secretive intimates, a low rung of largely talentless political henchmen who man the ministries or run the state governments and multitudes of faceless loyalists left behind from the party's endless splits or inducted from the Youth Congress(I) during the Sanjay era.

Warnings: A rising chorus is beginning to see the ruling party for what it is. Writing in the *Indian Express* last month, veteran editor S. Mulgaokar—no friend of Mrs Gandhi—was moved to express his admiration for her political instincts but surveying the state of the nation warned: "The situation demands drastic remedies and an awesome responsibility rests on her. Here is a test of will by which she can redeem all the yesterdays of her non-fulfilment. But the action will have to be swift, for it is later, much later than Mrs Gandhi fears."

Even so sympathetic an observer as *Times Of India* Editor Girilal Jain was last fortnight moved to warn of the Congress(I)'s hopeless situation. Wrote Jain: "In plain terms, if either Mrs Gandhi does not try and reshape the Congress(I) to give it coherent organisational structure or she fails in her effort, the country will face chaos." He added: "The Congress(I) must be rescued from the opportunism and cynicism into which it has sunk if the democratic order has to survive in the country."

Gossip: Whether or not democracy can be so closely identified with the survival of one party, and, in its turn, the political bio-rhythm of one individual, is a moot point. But there is no doubt that waves have been rolling in with growing force and increasing regularity. Poignantly enough, the wave with the whitest crest has rolled out of Mrs Gandhi's own household. For two weeks now, Maneka Gandhi has been the veiled focus of interminable gossip in political circles. For weeks before that, the grape-vines were agog with wild rumours about the sale of Maneka's *Surya* (see INDIA TODAY, March 15, 1982) to members of the RSS, about her frustrated move to enter politics, about her growing confrontation with a coterie surrounding Rajiv, and about a simmering discontent within the party which might eventually seek a convenient mascot in Maneka.

The malaise finally blew to the surface when Akbar Ahmed, the thin, sharp-eyed, bearded MLA from Uttar Pradesh, decided to hold the Lucknow convention. An unabashed champion of the view that the old Sanjay loyalists should be given places of honour in the party, he dropped a ton of bricks when he put Maneka's name in the

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nvitation card as the chief speaker.

After a few days of suspense, it was clear hat Maneka would address the convention. n fact, soon after Mrs Gandhi had left for London, Maneka packed up her suitcase, ook along her two-year-old son Feroze Varun, and left for the cool heights of Nainital. From there she issued a press statement, which was circulated by her sister Ambika Anand, and which read: "I am very happy to accept the invitation of my late husband's people to attend their discussion on Sunday, March 28, at Lucknow for further implementation of his five-point programme."

Sharp Rebuke: That the assorted group surrounding Mrs Gandhi took the challenge seriously was clearly in evidence from the sharp public rebuke handed down to Ahmed. In a surprising blitz, the octogenarian president of the Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee-I (UPCC-I), Bishambhar Nath Pandey, an old faithful of the Nehru vintage, suspended Ahmed from the party.

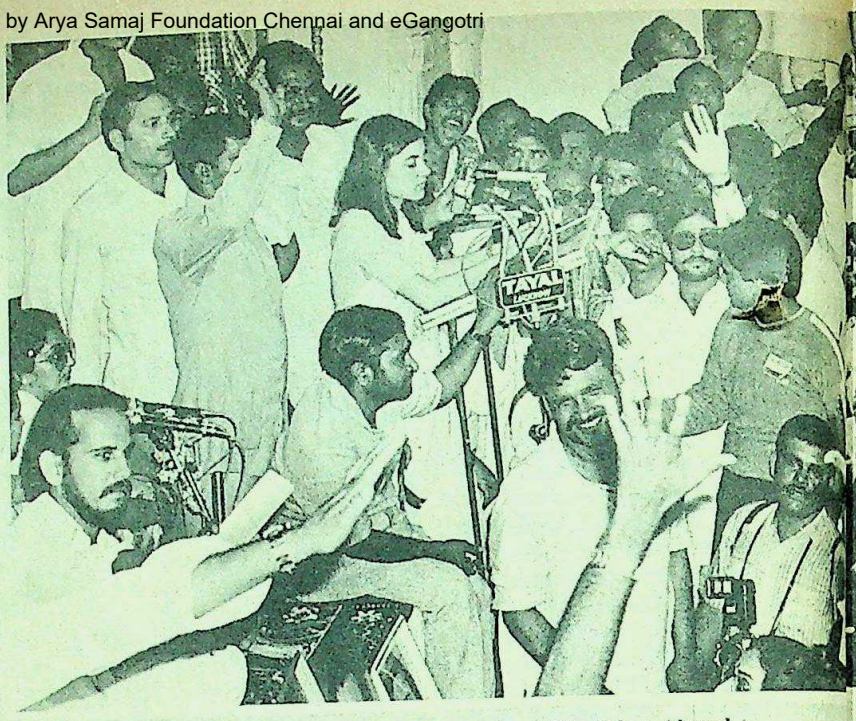
The order, which betrayed a sense of unease, had two not unexpectedly contrary results. As a sign of official disapproval it served to subdue those among the ranks of the Congress(I) who may have been emboldened to side with Ahmed, or at least demonstrate a degree of sympathy for him. At the same time, it served to lend some credibility to a mere MLA who had the gumption to take on the Congress(I) establishment.

Ahmed's attempt to paint himself in a David and Goliath scenario is politically suicidal. It may also have had the stuff of fantasy but it touched a raw nerve. In the nearly two years since her husband's death, Maneka has been reduced, like a tigress caged, to political goutiness. Shuttling between the splendid seclusion of the prime minister's two-acre bungalow and her brother's modest home at Jorbagh, watching brother-in-law Rajiv grow inch by inch in political stature, she has chafed at the invisible cage surrounding her.

Leaderless Horde: On the other side of these unseen bars is the vast army of neo-Congressmen, the faceless Sanjay rabble who stormed their way to the core of a very amorphous party in 1978 and 1979. They were left leaderless and spiritless with Sanjay's death, and have been adrift, unheralded and unsung ever since. Mrs Gandhi, to them, is a remote figure. Rajiv, on the other hand, is no *deus ex machina* leaping into the breach to seize the mantle of his departed brother and give leadership to the horde.

For them, as well as for old-timers in the Congress(I), the seal and emblem of Mrs Gandhi is like a meal coupon, because her

PICTURES BY BHAWAN SINGH



Maneka at the Lucknow convention with Akbar Ahmed

LUCKNOW CONVENTION

Tricks And Treats

THE PANWALLAHS of Lucknow knew of her arrival in the city almost before the vast conclave of gathered politicians did. And the posters announcing her controversial convention were as full of portent as the gathering of prizefighting birds collecting for a bout of Lucknow's famous cockfights being held a stone's throw away from the venue. Maneka Gandhi's meeting last Sunday—held in an ancient hall known as the Baradari, once the pleasure dome of Wajid Ali Shah—was neither bloody nor banal but notable still in a month of Sundays. It became an event precisely because it was so rigorously labelled as a non-event; her presence achieved political credibility simply because of the shrillness of censure that surrounded it.

Minutes after she hit the outskirts of the city on Saturday evening, a mob of about 200 attacked her convoy, shattering the panes and windscreen of her security car and injuring the two accompanying security men. As the driver of her green Matador made a dash to transport her, two-year-old son Feroze Varun, her brother Viren and two old friends from Sanjay's flying club days—Harry and Madhu Singh—safely to the crumbling Carlton Hotel, whatever curiosity value she held in the city rapidly transformed to unspoken sympathy.

Next day she remained incarcerated with her party in the heavily-guarded wing of the Carlton till the exact moment she was expected to arrive at the Baradari. All morning, the convention's chief organiser, the sharp-talking, light-eyed Akbar Ahmed, determined to make most of his rebellious bid for political independence, mustered supporters together on the terrace of the Baradari. Orchestrating the entry of the press, posting his own private army of security volunteers, he appeared an incongruous mixture of true grit and nervous sweat. "Do these people appear members of the RSS to you?" he angrily demanded, waving a hand at the milling crowd of khadi-clad volunteers, many of them armed with weapons.

Dramatic Entry: In less than 40 minutes it was all over. Making a dramatic entry through the building's back door, a boisterous crowd of between 8,000 to 10,000 spilled over from the terrace to the street to hear her prepared but mostly inaudible speech, Maneka Gandhi had done the deed that had taken her nearly a year-and-a-half to prepare for. It was more than a day's work for the precocious, often petulant, young widow who has been waiting grudgingly in the wings to make her entry into public life as a political entity.

For a girl who started life as a model, insinuated herself into a marriage

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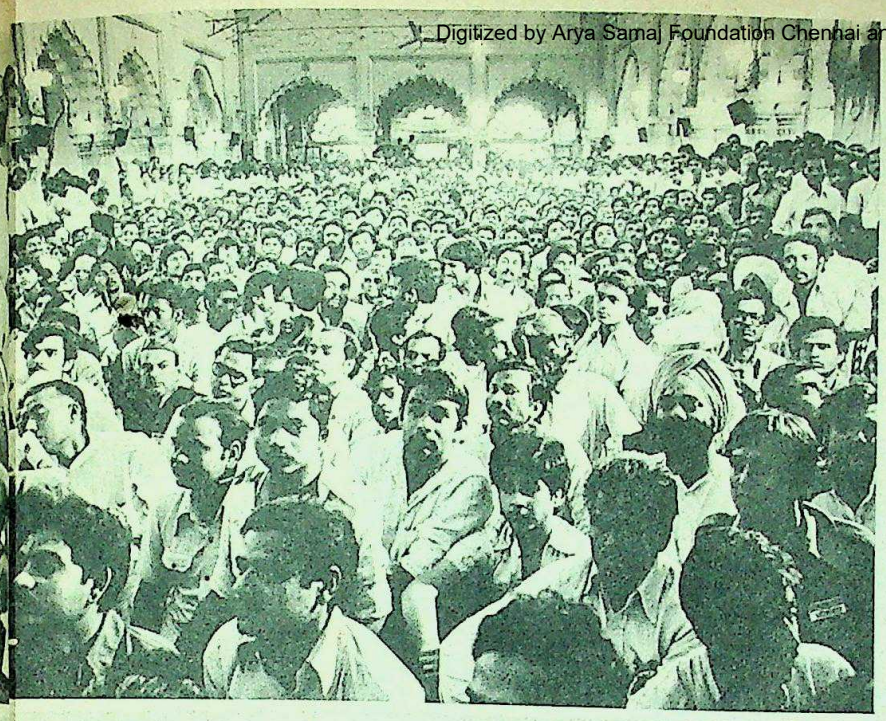

A view of the crowded hall listening to her speech

brought her instant stardom—and bitter anguish—Maneka in her present political incarnation has learnt to handle limelight the hard way. The petulance of being regarded as a famous man's wife, a famous woman's daughter-in-law or worst of all, a rising star's sister-in-law, has vanished. In its place is a hard, calculating young woman, combining the moral superiority of her mother-in-law, the self-righteousness of her late husband and none of the mild-mannered charm and diffidence of her perceived rival, Rajiv Gandhi.

For Maneka has come to regard herself as Sanjay's rightful successor, and the arduous months of being crushingly sidestepped at 1, Safdarjung Road have motivated her to find a forum for herself. If it sounds like a medieval Moghul court intrigue, it is. In popular, and peculiarly Indian terms, it also embodies the classically antagonistic relationship between a domineering mother-in-law and a provoking daughter-in-law. As an elderly Muslim onlooker in Lucknow put it in succinct Hindustani: *Sass bahu ka jhagra hai, to padosiyon ke ghar mein halwa* (It's a fight between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, so naturally all neighbours will distribute sweets).

Ambitious Pretender: Even so, Maneka's emergence into the political arena could not have been achieved singularly nor without planning. Typically, the languishing but ambitious pretender to the throne, in the face of a royal anointment having taken place, found some predictable allies: her own mother Amteshwar for one; a trusted but now disgruntled lieutenant of her late husband called Dumpy; and the lieutenant's close companion for nearly two years, Vasundhara Raje, a real-life princess from Gwalior and daughter of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Vijaye Raje Scindia, who not only proved allegiance by disposing off a useless property, *Surya*, but carefully went around canvassing for the new Maneka among top echelons of the media—where she found no takers—and in New Delhi's rumour-ridden drawing rooms.

Maneka with family portraits decorating the dais

The ground quietly but steadfastly prepared, Maneka herself appeared in a new avatar. Last weekend in Lucknow, amid the hurly-burly of the convention, in the unbridled anger of attacks on her van, and the near-violent reception she received as she stepped off the plane at New Delhi airport, Maneka was displaying not only the traditional tricks her mother-in-law has perfected in rough rides in rocky places but some treats of her own. Cool, precise, unflustered by the unpredictability of the reception or the uncertainty of mob reaction, she manipulated her audience, as well as a highly sceptical press, with impeccable flourish. Sighting an old photographer colleague from her journalist days in the Baradari mêlée she teasingly urged him to do a good job of the show. Yet she refused to meet any member of the press individually or in a group; her manner remained as canny a mixture of shrewdness and subtlety as the contents of her speech or the famous "Dear Mummy" letter to Mrs Gandhi that preceded it.

Glaring Ambiguity: Perhaps she was stretching credibility beyond admission when she declared in her letter from Corbett Park that her presence in Lucknow was necessary "to nip any possible mischief in the bud". Certainly she was relying on glaring ambiguity when, in lines that sounded like souped-up *filmi* dialogue, she asserted in her speech that she would continue to abide by the norms, discipline and self-respect of the Gandhi family even as her mother-in-law was fulminating against her "anti-party activity". Maneka had a cocky enough answer to that too when she quickly added that for the moment she would have to tolerate what her elders were saying about her, coolly reminding the same elders that it was Sanjay who had given the present Government life and power.

In that sense, she is not only fully in control of the present but eager to cash in on the benefits her unusual situation provides. "The stronger the reaction against her, the more martyred she will become," admits a Congress(I) politician who sees the built-in futility of obstructing her progress, "in fact the strongest action the party or prime minister can take against her is to ignore her and her activities. But that may be the hardest thing to do."

—SUNIL SETHI in Lucknow

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name alone draws the votes. "I don't want to become another Devraj Urs," quipped one of those Youth Congress(I) split personalities who, after one week of dithering, finally decided to throw in his lot with the winning side, the side of Mrs Gandhi.

It is the numbing fear of losing the 'meal coupon' that finally sealed Ahmed's fate. One after another, the condemnations rose to a crescendo. Even die-hard Sanjay loyalists stepped out of their ranks to join the chorus. The pace was set by Sanjay Singh, the Uttar Pradesh Youth Congress(I) president, and one of the closest friends of Sanjay and Maneka, who described the convention as an "anti-party activity". To follow suit was Jagdish Tytler Delhi MP, chief of the Delhi Youth Congress(I), and also a personal friend.

Condemnations: Close on its heals were condemnations from Sibte Razi, UPCC-(I) general secretary, and Ashok Bajpai, an Uttar Pradesh MLA. Bajpai, who fulminated at Ahmed saying that not a single Youth Congress(I) MLA from Uttar Pradesh would join his "anti-party convention", brought additional substance to his threat by virtue of his connections; his mother, Rajendra Kumari Bajpai, is an AICC-(I) general secretary.

A common reaction was: "It's a family matter." There was, of course, more to it than that. Condemnation of Ahmed could be twisted into a condemnation of Sanjay Gandhi's five-point programme, indeed his entire political legacy. Said a Sanjay loyalist: "If anyone dared utter a word against Sanjay, we'd have immediately got together to muster at least a hundred MPs to sign a statement condemning the move." The silence was ominous, and some top Congress(I) politicians were moved—anonymously, of course—to assert that a lot of people might even be enjoying the spectacle.

Sanjay, Maneka and Dumpy (bearded, to Sanjay's right) leaving court after Kissa Kursi Ka hearing in 1979: tempestuous baptism into politics

IN a sense that was hardly surprising, for the party is caught in the throes of yet another transformation. Between 1978 and 1980, her party went in for what one functionary described as a "total transfusion of blood" and the party units down to the block level were chock-a-block with an entire new generation of Congressmen. It was Sanjay who provided a link with the new cadres and was their guiding spirit. Said H. N. Bahuguna, chairman of the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) who resigned his post as secretary general of the Congress(I) in 1980: "When I was invited by Mrs Gandhi to rejoin her in 1979 it took me just a couple of days to realise that the Congress as we know it had been metamorphosed into something different. It was 'Indira Congress' in name but 'Sanjay Congress' in reality."

Like a tireless general fighting with a ragtag army, Sanjay was making and breaking ranks, creating a new hierarchy and switching tactics, all aimed at the single goal of wresting power from the Janata Party. The Congress Parliamentary Party-I (CPP-I) as it exists today, is flush with people handpicked by Sanjay; 180 of the 354 MPs were given nomination directly by him. Every fourth MLA of the Congress(I) in the states is his direct District Congress Committee-I (DCC-I) nominee; each PCC(I) executive member and chief was chosen by him

It is the pick of this lot, men like Tytler, Kamal Nath, Gufran-e-Azam, who have been cut to size, not to mention official Sanjay elevated over the claims of others lik former Delhi Lt Governor Jagmohan an former Delhi Police chief P.S. Bhinder. Say one Sanjay confidant: "It is only Sanjay wit whom we could relate. He baptised us int politics." It is notable that in these loyalist homes, a smiling portrait of Sanjay d minates living rooms.

Sanjay Creations: The 1980 chief mini ters were mostly creations of Sanjay, m like Antulay, Karnataka's Gundu Ra Orissa's J.B. Patnaik and Bihar Jagannath Mishra, many whom have been embroiled controversy. Earlier, they we catapulted into prominence Sanjay during the Emergen and the Janata period. Antul was a little-known politici who was picked by Sanjay be made an AICC general sec tary during the Emergen Gundu Rao, who was mer the Youth Congress preside in Karnataka, could not visu lise in the wildest of his drea that he would be made the ch minister by Sanjay. Jagann Pahadia, a timid Harijan lea who lived for months in a sm room in the outhouse of Gandhis' residence at 1 Windsor Crescent in Ne De during the Janata period, to pinch himself to believe th Sanjay had made him the ch minister of Rajasthan.

Rao had the reputation being a back street tough Bangalore; Antulay had co under a cloud even a deca earlier when he was a minis under the late V.P. Naik; Pa dia, as a former minister of st at the Centre, had too undis guished a career to be ra seriously. Still the magic wor as long as Sanjay was at helm. Talking informally, old friend of the Gandhi fam invoked the simile of a cir ring, saying: "Sanjay was like the master who knew how to prod the lion bounding through a wheel of fire, or to the tiger into a bow." He added with dis nible sarcasm: "Circus animals do not orders from an unskilled master."

That much seems true, at least o first 15 months of Rajiv's novitiate at helm of party affairs—much too shor period in which to judge political pe mance. Within weeks of Sanjay's d when Mrs Gandhi decided to launch Ra preference to Maneka, it was general

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lieved that the time-tested Sanjay brigade would accept his leadership without demur. But the transition has not been easy. Between him and the party falls the long shadow of inexperience and inhibition. The khadi cap does not easily fit.

Muted Resentment: It simply isn't possible to change the ways of large legions of MPs and MLAs who had strong personal loyalty to Sanjay any more than it is to replace them with a different kind of politician. There is surprising—if muted—resentment within sections of the Sanjay brigade at Rajiv's hesitant ways. Some clearly miss the swashbuckling Sanjay style.

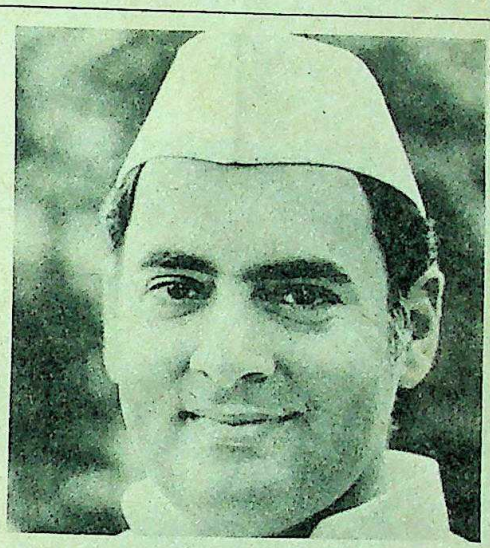
The reasons are not hard to find. Rajiv is no sackcloth and ashes politician, he is a stranger to the dust and dirt of ground-level politics where Sanjay won his spurs. Sanjay used his organisational clout to give his party a framework of orts and put a clutch of hard-osed chief ministers in office. The Rajiv era, in contrast, has arely got off the ground. In act, it is hardly an era. Rajiv as been in politics 15 months ut he remains a loner in politics, scrupulous beginner who is ining to make a fresh start but hams trung by his reticent uavity, his primness, his lack of oorings. The much maligned Rajiv coterie' (it is not yet belled a caucus) comprising run Nehru, MP, and aides like idhartha Reddy, Vijay Dhar d Arun Singh, are really a *rdon sanitaire* around him.

As the widely acknowledged Mr Clean', he is like a general the head of the wrong army. ragtag but potent force put gether by his brother. Recruits e hard to find for an army of new kind, Rajiv's dilemma is al. If he tries to intervene in me manner of a Sanjay he will rn censure for being another xtra-constitutional authority". And because he doesn't, he comes across as an effective amateur. Nor has it helped matters Mrs Gandhi to insist—a necessary precondition to keep the party together—that ly those who stood by her in the 1978 rty split and were with her in her darkest s be given prominent office. The room manoeuvre is severely limited.

Stubborn Leader: Its first indication me in the wake of the Antulay saga when er being thrown out of power, he led Mrs ndhi a madcap polka. Supported by at first the party High Command, Antulay resigned only in January after four months of furore—when Justice B. Lentin of the Bombay High Court had found him guilty of having given cement quotas to users in exchange for donations to his trusts. However, within hours of the judgement, the entire Congress Legislature Party (I) of Maharashtra was huddled in a conclave, reposing their faith in Antulay's leadership and hurriedly adopted a resolution which pointedly referred to Mrs Gandhi's own refusal to step down following the adverse Allahabad High Court judgement in 1975.

For the party leadership, so embarrassing was the development that the state governor had to be asked the same evening to press for Antulay's resignation, failing which he was advised to dismiss the cabinet. Though Antulay eventually resigned, he left behind an eerie presence-in-absence. The high command sought to counter it by propping up Bhosale, a political flyweight as Antulay's successor. But within weeks Bhosale found himself buried in a mine of trouble.

Antulay himself discreetly steered clear of controversy, but his minions and hangers-on in the press and in Bombay's political world got busy digging up skeletons in Bhosale's cupboard, which were brimming over with them anyway. Thus Bhosale was alleged to be a co-respondent in a divorce petition filed by his daughter-in-law against his son two years ago; his otherwise undistinguished past as a member of the Revenue Tribunal was raked up to uncover past taints; rumours gripped Bombay that the Bhosale Cabinet comprised a rapist, a proven thief and a boy-hunter. An impression was effectively created that Bhosale was indeed a passing cloud, while Antulay, sitting primly as the chairman of the state-run Irrigation Development Corporation, enjoyed the situation as well as the immunity that the Government post gave him against "legal harassment".



RAGHU RAI

Rajiv is no sackcloth and ashes politician, he is a stranger to the dust and dirt of ground-level politics where Sanjay won his spurs... ...Rajiv has been in politics 15 months but he remains a loner, a scrupulous beginner who is pining to make a fresh start but is hamstrung by his reticent suavity, his primness and his lack of moorings

Confused Selection: The party's tumbling image was reinforced by the run-up to the recently concluded Rajya Sabha polls. Outwardly, the task was simplicity itself; the composition of the assemblies would have permitted straight election of over 50 Congress(I) members in the 69 vacancies in the Upper House of Parliament this year. However, things went sour at the very beginning. Apparently few people in what is vaguely called the Congress(I) High Command had a clear idea of individual claims and abilities, or how to satisfy the incompatible interest groups and at the same time find the right candidates.

There was also unseemly dithering. Yogendra Makwana, the Rajya Sabha member from Gujarat who had been shifted in January from the Union Home Ministry to the less prestigious Ministry of Communications as minister of state, was first denied renomination but, within half an hour, the decision was reversed. Two other ministers of state, Charanjit Chanana and Sawai Singh Sisodia were not as fortunate. After being kept for days on tenterhooks they were finally guillotined, and that too during the budget session of Parliament—a prime example of unintended rudeness. The irony is that for two weeks this unfortunate two-some had to face the Opposition in a house to which they

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AKBAR AHMED

"I Have Joined Battle"

AKBAR AHMED, 36, would have remained just one of the faceless mass of 325 Congress(I) legislators of Uttar Pradesh had he not decided to hold a convention of Congress(I) workers in Lucknow and invited Maneka Gandhi to address it. Ahmed, known as "Dumpy" to his Doon School buddies, including the late Sanjay Gandhi, would have gone down in history as one of those nine days' wonders who rose and fell with Sanjay. To Maneka, he would have remained a ghazal-loving, *sprightly friend of the family who had a brief stint in politics and also happened to be among her husband's pall-bearers. To the politicos, he would have been—as he himself wryly puts it—"a* bhootpurva *(former) MLA".*

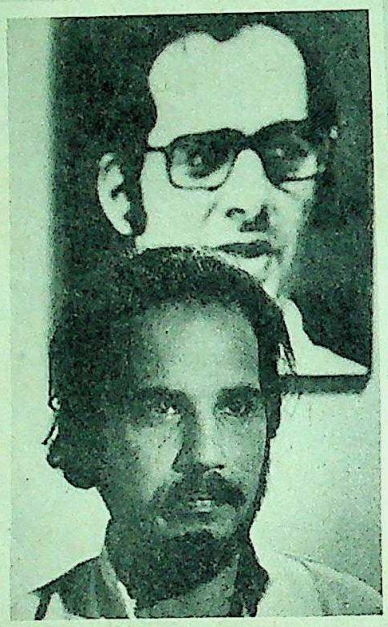
But Ahmed took friendship seriously ever since he ran into Sanjay after a gap of 18 years at a wedding in December 1976. The celebrity friend, now with a receding hairline accompanied by a pert and attractive wife, hugged him warmly and without any preliminaries, invited him to join the Congress. Ahmed, without asking a question, accepted the offer. Thus was born a friendship which survived the vicissitudes of Sanjay's political fortune.

On June 23, 1980 Sanjay died and the uppermost question was who should join the party—Rajiv or Maneka. Ahmed sided with Maneka, a move that annoyed Mrs Gandhi. On July 28, when he called on Maneka as usual, he had a tiff with Mrs Gandhi following which he submitted his resignation from the Assembly. The letter is still with Mrs Gandhi. He drove out of the prime minister's house on August 16, 1980, never to enter it again.

Possessing a quick-silver temperament, Ahmed first made it to newspaper columns as a relentless critic of Vishwanath Pratap Singh, the Uttar Pradesh chief minister. A disturbed Rajiv sent three emissaries—all Doon School mates—to Ahmed for a meeting. The threesome, Micky Rampur, Farooq Abdullah and Amrindra Singh, all MPs, were told by Ahmed that he could meet Rajiv only at the central hall of the Parliament.

From that day, he decided to work for Maneka. He established contact with Sanjay-loyalists among bureaucrats, such as former Delhi police commissioner P.S. Bhinder and former Delhi Lt-Governor Jagmohan. The party High Command was aware of it, and Ahmed's friends were sacked or transferred one after another. It coincided with the not so subtle 'de-Sanjayification' under way—with heads of suspected Sanjay-men rolling at metronomic intervals. From Vidya Charan Shukla in 1981 to Charanjit Chanana last fortnight, it was quite a procession.

Ahmed decided to fight it out, "singly today, severally tomorrow". He says he has never sought the support of H.N. Bahuguna, a friend of his father—a former inspector-general of police—in his campaign. He discounts as "total fabrication" the theory that the Bharatiya Janata Party, (BJP) *is behind him. He claims he was offered a berth in the Uttar Pradesh council of ministers by V.P. Singh if he agreed to call off the convention.*



Ahmed: "It is not Rajiv versus Sanjay"

In Delhi, he stays in a bungalow at Maharani Bagh owned by Maneka. His living room designed like a log-cabin, is fitted out with a superb quadrophonic system, gifted by Sanjay. Sprawling in the room on a rich Kashmiri carpet, and almost buried under posters and banners for the convention in Lucknow, Ahmed spoke to INDIA TODAY *Correspondent* PRABHU CHAWLA. *Excerpts:*

Q. *Why did you call this conference?*

A. I decided to organise the public meeting to rejuvenate Sanjay's five-point programme. This programme is not receiving as much attention as it deserves from the Government.

Q. *Did you seek the High Command's prior approval?*

A. Not exactly. But I did speak to the chief minister and various party leaders and no one objected to it. Moreover it was not a political meeting.

Q. *But you have been removed from the party's membership due to this conference?*

A. Who says that? I have been punished for organising a meeting for Sanjay's five-point programme. I don't feel humiliated. Let any one from the party come out and say that supporting Sanjay's ideals is an anti-party activity. The five-point programme is an integral part of the Congress(I) programme. And my suspension reflects what scant regard they have for Sanjay and his programme.

Q. *Then why have you been suspended from the party?*

A. You better put this question to Bhishamber Nath Pandey, the UPCC(I) president. One thing I must tell you is that no action would have been taken against me, if I had invited either Arun Nehru or Sidhartha Reddy (an aide of Rajiv Gandhi) to be the chief guest at the meeting because they think that Uttar Pradesh belongs to them. I have never gone against the party since 1977 when people like Pandey and Vishwanath Pratap Singh were nowhere to be seen.

Q. *Do you think that action against you has been taken in consultation with Mrs Gandhi?*

A. I am not sure about it. Mrs Gandhi was, is and will remain my undisputed leader. She is being misled by a coterie comprised of Arun Nehru, Makhan Lal Fotedar and Sidhartha Reddy. An Emergency-type situation is being created now. All channels of communications with Mrs Gandhi are closed to those who do not approve the coterie's style of functioning. Mrs Gandhi's house has been taken over by sychophants, favour-seekers, opportunists and people with dubious records. My fight is against these elements.

Q. *Can you identify the people who dominate party affairs?*

A. I have already named them. Arun Nehru, the paint peddler, and Fotedar, a sophisticated clerk. Where were these people when Sanjay was fighting the oppressive regime of the Janata Party? None of the politicians who now occupy important posts liked to share a cup of tea with Sanjay. They have now forgotten that what they are today is primarily due to Sanjay Gandhi.

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Q. ***Have they shifted their loyalties to Rajiv Gandhi?***

A. It is not Rajiv versus Sanjay as you people are painting it. I have joined battle on behalf of those Sanjay followers who are being thrown out of the party systematically. They are insulted and humiliated just because they still stand by Sanjay's philosophy and his widow who also fought and suffered for the party. All the Sanjayists like Jagmohan, P.S. Bhinder, and Vidya Charan Shukla have been removed from important posts. Even his personal bodyguard Jodha Singh and his driver Ramchander have been thrown out of the house. It is nothing but an attempt to wipe out the Sanjay legacy from the country for ever.

Q. ***So by inviting Maneka, you wanted to assert your claim for a better treatment in the party?***

A. No. Mrs Maneka Gandhi is the widow of our leader—she showed enough strength and will-power when no one cared to visit her. Today, at no stage have Sanjay's followers been given recognition. Instead a witch-hunting campaign has been let loose against them. Their phones are bugged, CBI, IB and other intelligence agencies are following their activities as if they are enemies and veiled threats are made to them. Our fight is against this system, I am sure Mrs Gandhi is not aware of all this.

Q. ***Some of your party members allege that the meeting was an attempt to project Maneka at the national level with the support of opposition groups like the Kshtriya Swyamsewak Sangh*** **(RSS)?**

A. This is nonsense, insinuation. Those who allege that I have RSS support are misleading the people. Their fathers and forefathers were RSS activists and they fought elections on Jana Sangh tickets. It does not speak well of people like Surinder Singh Bhati to launch defamation proceedings against Maneka Gandhi soon after Sanjay's death. Is it only on the part of Charanjit Singh to withdraw ads and withhold payment of Rs 1,37,000 which was due to *Surya* only because Sanjay was no more? All of them are beneficiaries of Sanjay's politics.

Q. ***Do you think that Maneka will make a good political leader?***

A. Why not? Maneka Gandhi has come through the agonising process of political struggle. She possesses all the qualities of a good and strong politician. She can provide not only leadership to her husband's followers like me but also keep them busy in constructive activities.

could not return.

In the mêlée, the most harassed person was Vasantrao Dada Patil, the aquiline-nosed Maratha general secretary of the AICC(I) who is the most senior party functionary after Mrs Gandhi. Patil, who is a senior member of the Congress(I) Parliamentary Board which is, technically, the supreme arbiter in distribution of Rajya Sabha tickets, himself was in the dark about the list. Besieged by newsmen anxious to keep their copy deadlines, Patil was frantically dialing the prime minister's house for the final list of candidates from a late evening press conference last fortnight.

IT ONCE again highlighted the sad reality that the AICC(I) has been reduced to a mere post-box. Its lack-lustre and often deserted headquarters at 24, Akbar Road is the least important of the party's nerve-centres. The 'pilgrimage shrines' that really matter to ordinary Congressmen are—apart from the prime minister's residence—the spick and span official quarters of Rajiv Gandhi at 2A, Motilal Nehru Marg, and the office of Nehru at 12, Willingdon Crescent. Even the newly opened Youth Congress(I) office on Janpath, still smelling of fresh paint, draws more crowds than the AICC(I) office, largely because Youth Congress(I) chief Ghulam Nabi Azad's well-known rapport with Rajiv.

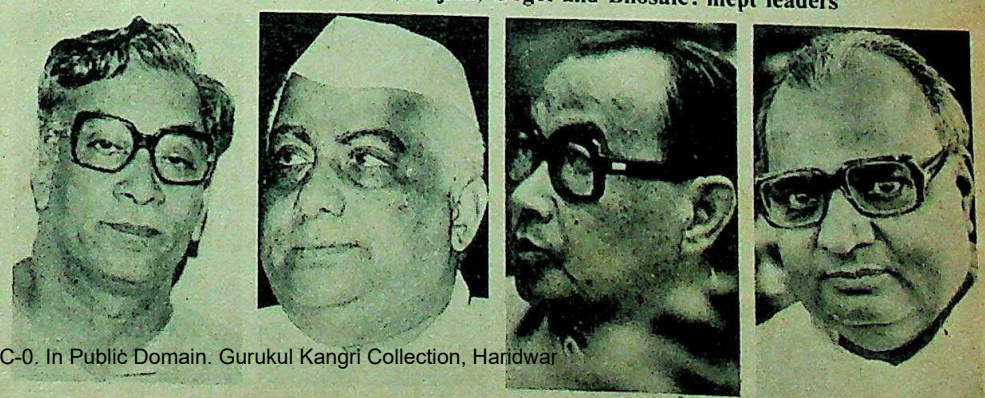
The organisation leaders realise the underlying effeteness of their chairs, but dare not displease the overlords. At the AICC(I) office, the five general secretaries have all been allotted impressive portfolios; Patil looks after administration and parliamentary board affairs, besides the state units of Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Delhi (ironically, Patil has little Hindi and less English); Bajpai, an Allahabad Brahmin who is a Hindi scholar, looks after the affairs of the north-eastern states and West Bengal; M. Satyanarayan Rao, who is a Rajya Sabha member from Andhra Pradesh, looks after the units in all southern states except Andhra Pradesh; Chandulal Chandrakar, who was recently dropped from the Union Council of Ministers, has been given charge of the state units of the remaining northern states; and G.K. Moopanar, a man bubbling with Tamilian wit, is the party's official spokesman on organisational matters.

In reality the general secretaries wield just as much power as any clerk in an office. Even the district committees of the party are reorganised and announced in the name of Mrs Gandhi. For instance, Ram Narayan Chaudhury, who led an incredible one-man Rajasthan PCC(I), resigned last year when his mentor Pahadia, was sacked. Since then the PCC(I) has not been constituted, nor has a successor to Chaudhury been appointed. Said Moopanar, who is 'in charge' for Rajasthan: "The case has been put up before the high command."

Little Structure: In fact, the party's most solid middle-tier organisation, the district committee, does not exist in a vast stretch of the country. Out of 365 districts, the DCC(I) exists in just 225. In some cases there are committee chiefs all right but no committees as such. In Andhra Pradesh, PCC(I) chief C. Das does not have an executive committee. Lower down the line, he does not have a single properly constituted district committee. The most amazing aspect of the party's organisation is that, at every level, it begins with a leader and then tries to dig downwards, making room for committees and workers. "In the beginning," said a senior party functionary in half-jest, "there was a leader..." It no doubt applies from the top right down to the block level organisation. In fact in half the cases where the district committees exist, the block committees do not.

Patil, however, claims that organisational deficiencies have in no way been an impediment to the party's popularity; according to him the Congress(I) has 30 million members. In other words, one out of every 10 adult Indians is a khadi-clad Congressman. "They are the silent majority of Congressmen," Patil muses, falling back on a popular cliche. The majority, however, has remained a bit too silent all these years; there has not been a single organisational election

(From left) Venkataram, Anjiah, Gogoi and Bhosale: inept leaders



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A.R. ANTULAY

Power Behind The Throne

NEVER, since the ancient hydraulic society of Egypt, had the office of the chairman of an irrigation development corporation shone in such glory. Never had so many people descended on the dark and dingy corridors of the Industrial Assurance Building near Churchgate in Bombay, where the corporation for the state of Maharashtra is housed. The reason for the eager crowds: Abdul Rehman Antulay, the chairman who, for all practical purposes, continues to be the *numero uno* in the state's politics.

Antulay had been appointed chairman of the corporation two days before the irrigation minister in the new Bhosale Cabinet, Sirajirao Nilanjekar Patil, was sworn in. "Antulay saheb was appointed directly," says Patil, leaving unstated the most obvious explanation, that Antulay had appointed himself: the fact that Chief Minister Babasaheb Anantrao Bhosale signed the papers was—as anybody in Bombay's Mantralaya, the secretariat, will readily admit—"a matter of formality".

Visitors: Antulay has no fixed time for office. "I come whenever I like," says he with a glint in his eyes which can mean both scorn and apology. But, wherever he goes, the crowd chases him. Last fortnight, at least 50 people were huddled in the waiting-room of the corporation's office, looking for interviews with Antulay.

There was Sonutai Kumbhe, a dark, flabby peasant woman who had come all the way from Nagpur to invite Antulay for a meeting. There was Satish Vaze, a student leader from Sangli, who wanted to discuss the problems of his college's student union with Antulay. There were proprietors of Bombay building firms, trade unionists from the dock area, a couple of schoolteachers from Kolhapur, representatives of the Haj committee, property lawyers, even stage actors.

While he met almost everyone who came, his own lawyers for the trust cases wove in and out of the gracefully upholstered room. "This chair gives me at least some relief," said he, reclining in his seat, "because I'm still a part of the Government and thus can't be dragged to court at the drop of a hat." Then, as if in self-admiration, he added: "Don't you think that Antulay has more important things to do than to move around from court to court?"

Antulay: undeniable clout

Important Leader: It is the same spectacle at his small (1,100 sq ft) temporary residence at the flat of Suresh Jain on Marine Drive, close to the Marine Lines station. The callers include P.D. Gavai, the state's chief secretary, the home secretary, the police commissioner and almost every notable at the Mantralaya. Jain is a Maharashtra MLA and a close relative of Jawaharlal Darda, an industrialist who served as industry minister in the Antulay cabinet.

Antulay appointed Jain chairman of the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation while Bhosale was the transport minister. The two quarrelled, and the transport portfolio was taken away from him. In February, a fortnight after Bhosale was sworn in, Jain gave him his resignation. But word went out from the Antulay camp to the chief minister's office,and Jain was straight away summoned by Bhosale and requested to withdraw his resignation. He did so, and the little drama left no one in doubt as to Antulay's importance.

His clout can be felt at the dome-shaped new assembly building, where Bhaurao Patil, the tough-talking, athletic MLA from Sewri in Bombay who is regarded as Antulay's chief lieutenant in the legislature party, acts as the *de facto* whip. When Bhosale enters the House, the Antulay loyalists, who are about 150 in a House of 288, exchange sarcastic glances and, with eyes lowered, jeer in unison: "Pundalik Varde Hari Vithal." The prayer to Vithal in Marathi is an embarrassing reference to Bhosale who, as minister in the Antulay cabinet, had gone to the Vithal temple at Pandharpur to offer puja on behalf of the Government.

Though the divorce suit between Bhosale's son Ashok and daughter-in-law Savita is being heard *in camera*, pamphlets containing very lurid materials purportedly culled from the second affidavit filed by Savita are readily available with Antulay's supporters. Antulay does not speak ill of Bhosale himself; but his three pillars,Ramrao Adik, Darda and Gulabrao Patil, the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee-I (MPCC-I) president, met Mrs Gandhi and complained against Bhosale.

Corrupt Practices: Two months have gone by, but Bhosale has not dared to touch any of the corrupt institutions Antulay had set up, such as the cement allotment committees, the system of allowing selective exemptions from the Land Ceiling Act, the tactic of first imposing a cut on alcohol available to the distilleries and then restoring the quotas, allegedly for a consideration.

In the chief minister's seat, Bhosale looks shy, almost apologetic. "We are two bodies with one soul," runs one of his famous observations about his relations with Antulay. But party insiders feel that Antulay may not like to bear with the additional body for long and has the capacity to topple the Government at very short notice. The majority of Congress(I) MLAs still eat out of his hand. And there are good reasons for that too: under Antulay, each MLA was getting a salary of Rs 2,250, which is more than that of a minister in the state. Besides, as everyone privately admits, to be the *ex officio* chairman of the regional cement allotment committee "means a lot of money".

Says an executive committee member of the MPCC(I): "Antulay is the only Maharashtra Congress leader who can hold on to his own ground even if Mrs Gandhi comes out openly against him. Y.B. Chavan tried that, and lost out. Sharad Pawar too tried that and failed. But Antulay may succeed." Die-hard anti-Antulay elements like Prabhakar Kunte and Premalatai Chavan think this claim is highly exaggerated. Says Kunte: "Antulay will fall like a ninepin if Mrs Gandhi condemns him once and openly." But nobody in the MPCC(I) is sure if Mrs Gandhi has the courage and the incli nation to do so.

—SUMIT MITR

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in the party since its formation in January 1978.

In December 1980, at the last AICC(I) session held at New Delhi's Talkatora Gardens, organisational elections were promised by June 1981. Came June, and they were postponed till December. Came December, and they were postponed indefinitely. There are specious pleas put out by the general secretaries from time to time. Today it is the mid-term poll, tomorrow it is the drought in Rajasthan. Lending a mock-serious touch to it, an AICC(I) office-bearer said: "An organisational election in a party like the Congress is even tougher to hold than the general election."

Wary Chief: The real reason is not far to seek. Mrs Gandhi, who holds the dual charge of the Government as well as the party, is wary of sacrificing any of these. But her responsibility as the head of the state claims 18 hours in a day, and often more. The PCC(I) chiefs often need to wait for months to squeeze a five-minute appointment with her. Despite her legendary memory for faces and names, she has hardly any personal knowledge of the various PCC(I) executive members, many of whom belong to a later era in the Congress.

This lack of communication was sadly reflected in her choice of chief ministers. When confronted with the task of selecting a successor to Antulay, her blue pencil ran down the list of 'loyalists' who had stuck with her in 1977, and stopped at the name of Bhosale, whom she did not know at all. His dossier only mentioned that he was the law minister in the Antulay cabinet, and that he was the son-in-law of Tulsidas Yadav, a former Rajya Sabha member who was faithful to her when she split the original Congress Party in 1969. She chose Bhosale without going into his antecedents, his predilections and capabilities.

In the past 15 months, she has changed five chief ministers, and brought in a whole new crop of people who are unknown quantities as far as she is concerned and whose stability for survival is suspect. In Andhra Pradesh, she chose B. Venkataram after a week of dilly-dallying. No sooner had Venkataram found the ground under his feet, than Congress(I) MLAs began to desert the party—twice in the first fortnight of his appointment. It took an official denial by proposed chief minister T. Anjiah to squash rumours that he was in open revolt and had formed a new party. Yet, Venkataram turned out to be an injudicious choice, and that due to Mrs Gandhi's lack of personla knowledge of the options.

In Assam, she foisted the government guided by Keshav Chandra Gogoi in haste, only hoping that Gogoi's minority government would be able to find enough MLAs to survive. The fact that it did not bears eloquent testimony to Gogoi's capabilities as a politician. The scenario repeated itself in Kerala where K. Karunakaran, the Congress(I) chief minister who had ridden to ephemeral power through defection, was beaten within weeks at his own game.

Dissidence: Under the veneer of harmony, the party is really seething with local dissidence. Last fortnight, three general secretaries of the Karnataka PCC(I) were suspended for "anti-party activities". Over 500 office-bearers are now suspended in various state units under this catch-all charge. In Assam, Gogoi complained that his ministry fell because of plotting by former Congress(I) chief minister Anwara Taimur. Said Gogoi: "The ministry would not have toppled if Taimur had not worked against me. Just when five Janata MLAs were about to support me, Taimur stepped up her fight against me and they became shy as they could not support somebody who faced so much opposition within his own party."

In Bihar, party workers send a memorandum to the prime minister against Chief Minister Jagannath Mishra almost every day. Each Congress(I) chief minister has to contend with a wall of dissidence, each PCC(I) president has to cope with a ginger group which wants to see him out of office. "These are minor pinpricks for such a vast party," says Chandrakar with disarming simplicity. Still, Chandrakar's office at the AICC(I) alone receives more than 200 telegrams and letters every day complaining against state party bosses.

The rising curve of corruption and misuse of office has, if anything, heightened dissidence. Legislators denied office—and, hence, a share of the lolly—inevitably turn dissident unless they have godfathers who can keep them happy. In the welter of charges and countercharges that fly across the cracks in the party, none ring truer tha allegations of corruption.

Dilemma: Against this daunting back ground, Mrs Gandhi's and Rajiv's party i going to the polls this year in at least nin states and a Union territory. It is a min general election, for which the party has tc find over 1,300 candidates for Assembly seats. The task is formidable. As Ahmed says: "These 1,300 people won't drop from the sky. The present coterie cannot produce them from under their hats."

Whether or not the party can, the choice ahead is basically what the Congress (I)'s ultimate dilemma is. Having charted a determined course to bring the party on a more even keel, Mrs Gandhi has to see it through if she is to hand over the reins to a Rajiv secure enough to grasp them. The Rajya Sabha elections showed the long way that remains: out of 59 candidates selected last fortnight, as many as 40 old members had to be retained. But a beginning was made with Rajiv putting through almost a dozen that he personally favoured.

Till now, Rajiv's has been a continuation of the hand-me-down, marsupial politics of India under the Nehrus. But Mrs Gandhi knows that the party needs a new thrust. The summer's poll is merely part of the count-down to a more important battle looming in the future: the 1985 general election. Time is running out. Mrs Gandhi, in spite of her impressive stamina, her personal mass magnetism and unchallengeable stature knows she needs a well-honed party to win that ultimate test which will buy her another five years.

She is too canny not to recognise the challenges being gently wafted in her direction, from the Antulays of her party as much as the Ahmeds. She must feel the stirring resentment in the party's ranks at the concentration of power in a small coterie and the potential danger it heralds. Having once been cut off—to her cost—from the pulse of popular feeling, she is too shrewd a politician to lift her ear off the ground. A past master at political manipulation, she is too experienced not to recognise that encapsulated 20-point programmes are unlikely to move the nation or that dissidents and opponents are liable to ask for a mile if even an inch is yielded to them.

But she needs to galvanise her party, to shift it off the Sanjay track and press it firmly on the new route she and Rajiv are charting for it. The moot question is how to do this without upsetting the delicate balance between what is and what should be. If she moves too fast she can lose the loyal legions of more difficult days past. If she moves too slowly, she risks a worse fate at the hand of the electorate. For her it is a riddle within a conundrum.

Mrs Gandhi: faced with a conundrum

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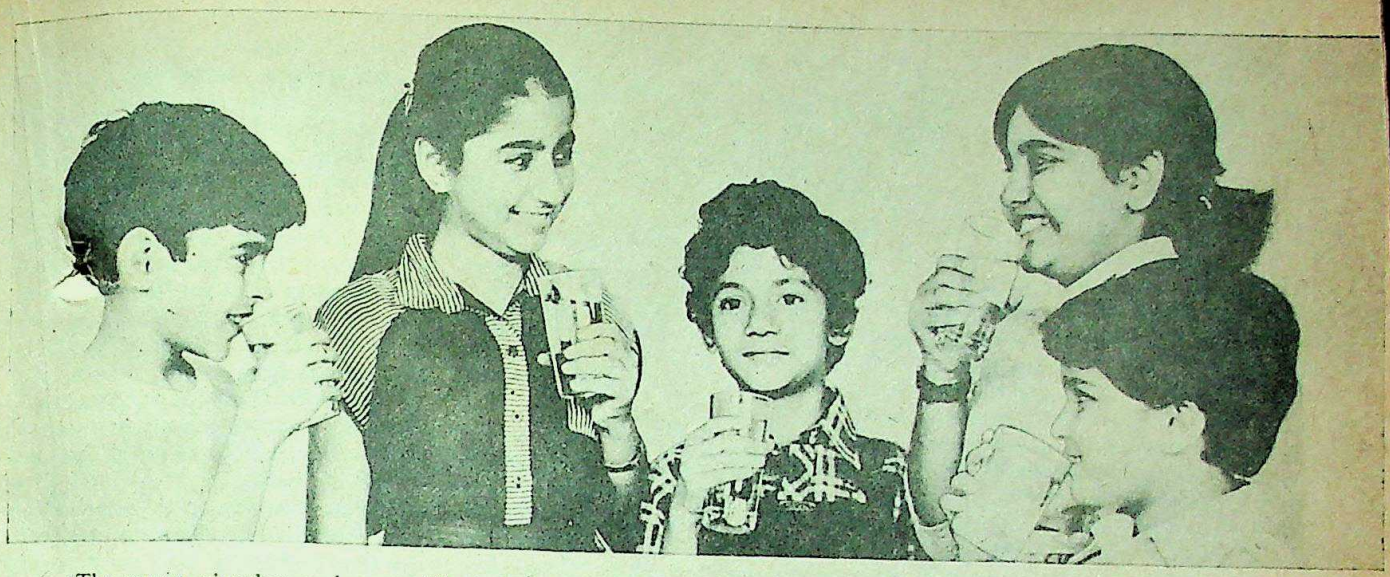

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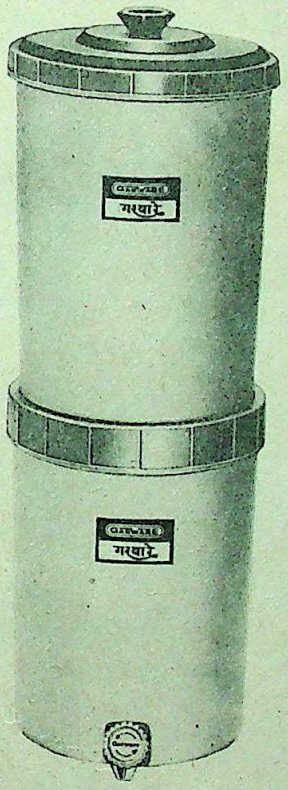

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ISAT

The Starry Messenger

ON the other side of the globe, a two-stage launcher is poised on a pad at the Kennedy Space Centre, Florida, or the instruction that will blast a compact ackage of electronics into orbit. Called the ndian National Satellite (INSAT), it will take ne 900-kg satellite six weeks after launch on April 8 to hover 35,784 km over India in a geostationary orbit. India will then become he sixth country to own a communications atellite—after the United States, the Soviet Union, Canada, Indonesia and Japan.

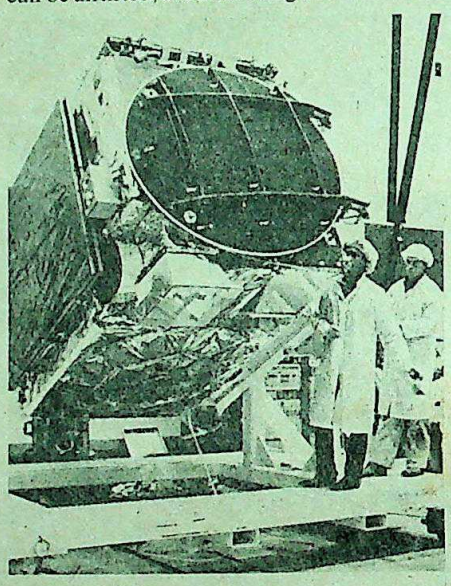
Designed as the lynchpin of communications in the country, INSAT will service television broadcasts, national telecommunications and meteorological information. This is the country's costliest space venture with about Rs 130 crore being spent on the space segment and an equal amount on the ground-based facilities being completed by user agencies like the Posts and Telegraphs Department, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) and Doordarshan.

Inadequate Expertise: Indian scientists and technicians have already had some experience with communications satellites (COMSAT) such as the American Applications Technology Satellite-6 (ATS-6) during the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE), the Franco-German Symphonie satellite during the Satellite Telecommunication Experiment (STE) in the '70s and now the entirely indigenous experimental telecommunications satellite APPLE (for Ariane Passenger Payload Experiment). But the technology for building a COMSAT is still to be fully developed and the Department of Space turned to Ford Aerospace and Communications Corporation in July 1978.

Ford Aerospace is to supply two geostationary satellites—the second is INSAT 1B and will be launched before October next year—and allied services, including equipment for the master control facility at Hassan in Karnataka. From here engineers will use two fully steerable 14-metre antennae to manage the spheres in the sky. The satellites themselves, based largely on the INTELSAT (V) satellites built by the same company, are box-like structures energised by an 11.5 sq m solar array in the transfer orbit and by a solar sail in the geo-synchronous orbit. Once in its assigned slot of 74 degrees east, INSAT will move at a speed synchronous with earth's. The length from one tip of the solar sail to the extreme end of the solar array is about 19.4 m. The body is about 2.18m by 1.55m by 1.42m.

The best slot for INSAT would have been 79 degrees east, but because of the rush for parking space up in the heavens, the satellite had to be content with its present slot. Says a scientist at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Bangalore: "All that matters is squatter's rights in what is fast becoming an orbiting slum." India's arc of interest had 14 satellites in 1970; some 60 occupy the same space now.

Benefits: INSAT provides for 8,000 two-way long distance telephone circuits, potentially accessible from any part of the country. The links will be through four main stations at Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and Madras and other stations in various parts of the country. Three mobile stations, including two that can be airlifted, are also being built for use in an emergency when existing communication links are disrupted.



Indian scientists studying the satellite

Nation-wide live radio and TV coverage from action spots—like the dance festival at Khajuraho or the Carnatic music concert at Tiruvayur—are also possible with these mobile TV stations. But for all this to be a reality, land-based cables, telephones, telex machines and other equipment must work and be always in order. To ensure this, a lot of down-to-earth work remains to be done. The Communications Ministry which is aware that only 10 per cent of the total telephone network serves the rural areas, is strengthening it. Meanwhile the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) is exploring the possibility of linking its offshore complexes and land-based centres via INSAT.

For a country with a long coastline and large land mass, which badly needs improved weather forecasting and disaster warning, INSAT will provide cloud pictures every 30 minutes instead of four pictures a day from foreign satellites that the IMD gets now. The very high resolution radiometer on board the satellite will bring round-the-clock, half-hourly observations from 110 data collection plateforms. Meteorological data recorded on these platforms are to be sent via INSAT to the central processing facility at the Meteorological Data Utilisation Centre (MDUC) in Delhi.

Forecasts: The centre has the capability of observing cyclonic storms over a specific region as frequently as every five minutes when in need, says a meteorologist. Forecasts about the development of storms, their intensity and direction of movement can then be beamed back via INSAT to 10 disaster warning centres being set up in the coastal districts.

Perhaps the greatest possible gain from INSAT is the use of its two TV channels—transponders in technological terms—for nation-wide television, both for entertainment and education. Although Doordarshan has plans to reach 15,30 villages in 18 districts spread over six states the direct TV broadcast by INSAT will be able to reach only Kurnool (Andhra Pradesh), Ranchi (Bihar) and Sambalpur (Orissa) districts when the programmes are formally inaugurated on August 15. Doordarshan sources argue that programmes are not yet ready, because the Union Cabinet sanction for using INSAT for special rural TV audiences came only in July last year.

The lackadaisical attitude is starkly evident, considering that most of the country can be covered by the primary area of INSAT's direct TV broadcast range. But no plan has been evolved for installing the direct reception sets, at least in clusters, in several states. Therefore in the initial months only villages in the three select districts and the TV sets within range of the 18 stations in the country will receive programmes via INSAT.

INSAT television coverage plans include 45 minutes of teleschool in the mornings and hour-long rural-oriented programmes in the evenings, followed by a common national telecast beginning at 9 p.m. after 30 minutes of news in English and Hindi. This channel will beam programmes of nationwide interest for about an hour. A space venture like the INSAT is justifiable only by practical payoffs, providing facts and figures for the balance sheet which can stand up to a cost-benefit analysis. But as one ISRO scientist remarked wryly: "The Americans dropped the broadest hint by naming their first COMSAT Early Bird. We have still to learn. Left alone our trying to catch up with others."

—AMARNATH K. MEN

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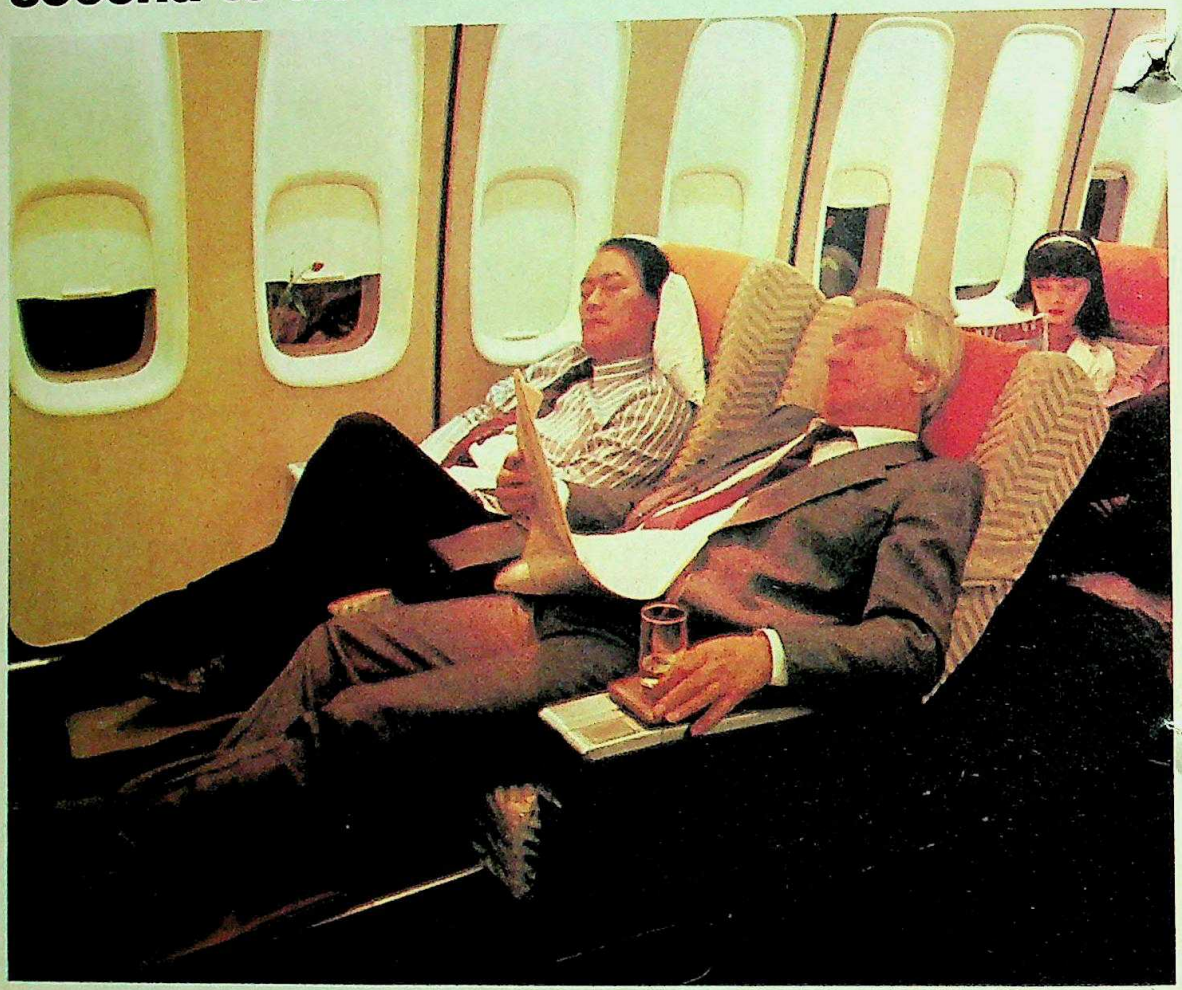

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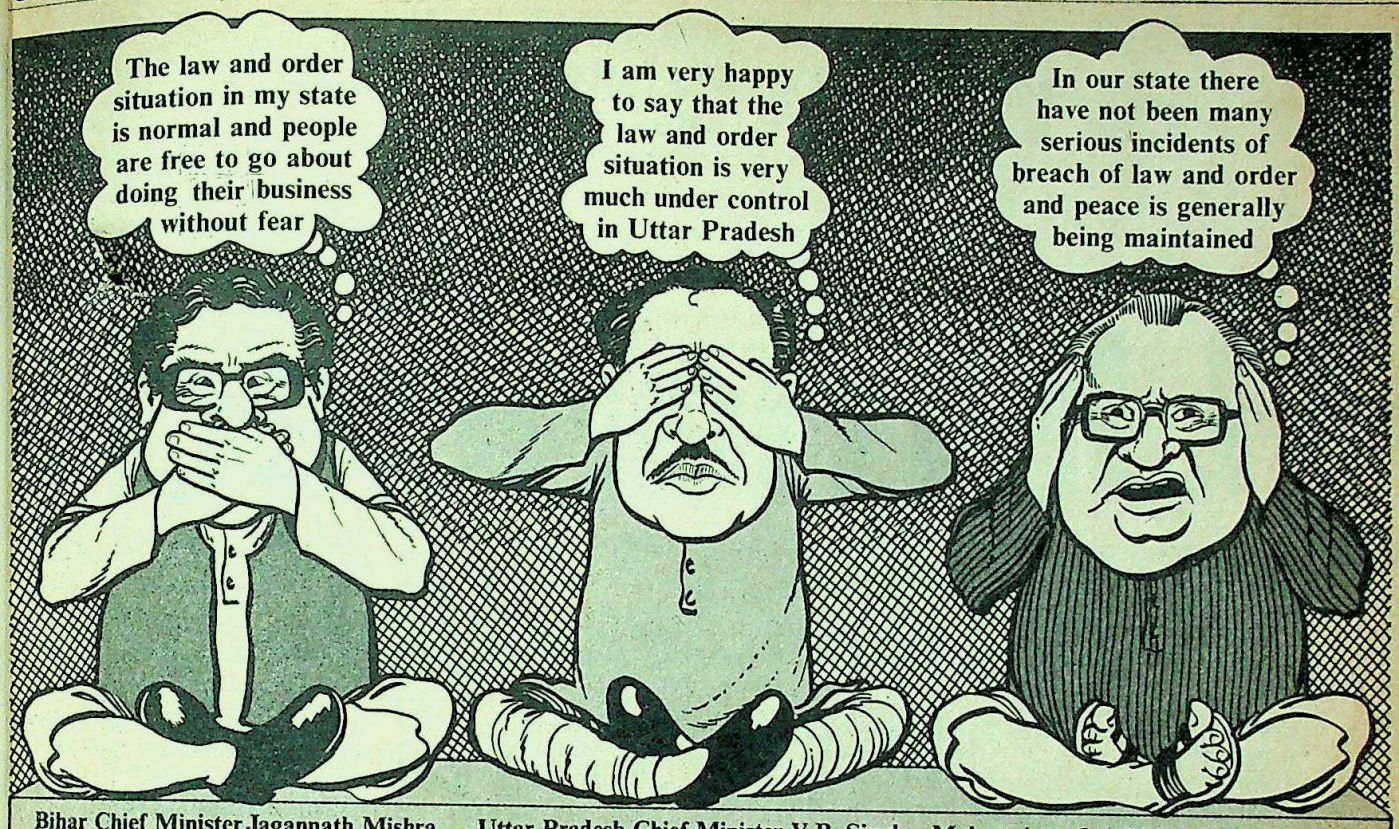

Bihar Chief Minister Jagannath Mishra | Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister V.P. Singh | Maharashtra Chief Minister B.A. Bhosale

W AND ORDER

Crime Marches On

UNFORTUNATELY, the picture is not as rosy as Mishra, Singh and Bhosale paint it. While they and 17 other chief ministers were ting themselves on the back at the tional Development Council (NDC) meet- chaired by Prime Minister Indira Gan- in New Delhi last month, over 4,400 mes were being registered that very day oughout the country, up from a 1980 ly average of 4,200. Criminals murder 70 ple and loot over 800 houses daily in the ion's 400 towns. Atrocities against the aker sections of society continue relent- ly. To cap it all, the conviction rate of ged criminals has dropped to 52 per cent 1981 from an already dismal 55 per cent 1978.

Whatever the soothing words poured Mrs Gandhi's ears at the meeting, it is r that the states have become happy ting-grounds for anti-social elements. s a senior official of the Planning Com- ion: "The ominous realities seem to eluded the vision of each chief mini- ." In fact, the chief ministers set aside information supplied by their own ad- istrations and indulged in rosy picture-painting to please Mrs Gandhi, although the prime minister herself had insisted on the inclusion of law and order on the NDC agenda for the first time.

Comprehensive Notes: In October last year, the Prime Minister's Secretariat directed state governments and union territories to prepare comprehensive notes on their respective law and order situations for discussion at the NDC meeting. The decision to involve a national body in what is primarily a state subject was taken in view of the growing communal tension and the atrocities on Harijans. The basic objective was to get a national overview of the crime situation and remove inter-state hurdles to dealing with criminals. Barring Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and West Bengal, all the states sent in the information asked for.

INDIA TODAY managed to procure some of the secret reports prepared for the NDC meeting. They include comparative figures for 1980 and 1981 along with explanatory notes for the rising incidence of crime. Some important conclusions are:

► crimes such as murder have increased in all states except Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Assam and Chandigarh;

► atrocities on Harijans are on the rise in 16 of the 24 states and Union teritories;

► there has been a spurt in extremist activity in Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland;

► West Bengal and Kerala lead the rest as far as political clashes are concerned;

► student and labour unrest was on the increase in 12 of the 20 states and Union territories which supplied information to the Centre; and

► only in five states and two Union territories has the total volume of crime declined—Sikkim, Meghalaya, Karnataka, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Chandigarh and Delhi. An analysis of the reports reveals that the Hindi belt—comprising Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi—accounts for over 80 per cent of murders, dacoities and robberies. On the other hand, according to a senior Home Ministry official, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh take the lead in political riots, demonstrations and political murders, while crimes committed for money take

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Gensets

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cond place. Says a Congress(I) MP from arnataka: "People in the south fight and e for issues rather than pennies."

POLITICAL violence has grown to alarming proportions. In Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala tched battles between political parties has sulted in the deaths of 200 party activists. erala tops the list—in the 10-week tenure the United Democratic Front Government one 10 people were killed in 200 political ashes. The Rashtriya Swyamsewak Sangh ss) continued to war with the Marxists and 1981, 32 murders followed 440 clashes. ys Suresh Kalmadi, president of All dia Youth Congress(S): "The opposition rties, particularly those of the extreme left d the extreme right, are killing themselves stead of uniting to fight the ruling party."

Across the border from Kerala, Tamil adu reported over 20 deaths from about 0 political clashes last year. In Andhra adesh, the state Government did not sup- y the exact figures but reported that skir- ishes in Khammam, Nalgonda and Wara- al districts were posing a danger to peace. sides, student groups like the Akhil Bha- tiya Vidyarthi Parishad, an RSS front orga- ation, and the Students' Federation of dia fought pitched battles on the state's npuses last year. Even in communist- ntrolled West Bengal, Congress(I)–CPI-M rs took 200 lives last year. Chief Minister ti Basu admitted at the NDC meeting that state's bad law and order situation was gely due to political tension.

Caste Anger: Contrary to the tall claims de by all state governments, the Harijans d the economically weaker sections conti- e to be the target of attacks by the d-owning class in rural areas. Uttar Pra- h and Bihar accounted for every second ault on Harijans and tribals—intelligence rts compiled by the Prime Minister's retariat indicate that over 400 Harijans e killed in inter-caste clashes last year. In Gujarat, 18 Harijans were killed in 1, as against 12 in 1980. In Rajasthan 51 sons of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe origin were murdered. Down south in Andhra Pradesh, weaker sections were having a hard time—police registered 240 cases under the Protection of Civil Rights Act in 1981, an increase of more than 40 per cent over the 170 registered in 1980. Politicians inevitably see sinister forces at work; says Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Arjun Singh: "We have ensured enough security arrangements for helpless people, but there seems to be a calculated attempt to erode the Congress(I) base by organised attacks on Harijans."

Communal violence is proving to be another headache. Minister of State for Home Affairs N.R. Laskar disclosed that 319 major communal incidents took place in 1981 as against 304 in 1979, the last year of the Janata-Lok Dal regime. This is still an improvement on the 427 major communal incidents of 1980, in which over 375 people were killed. Ruling party leaders make exaggerated claims like that of Orissa Chief Minister J.B. Patnaik: "1981 was the year of communal harmony in most of the states. With preventive measures and mature action we have been able to minimise communal tension in the country."

The Central Government's major success has been Assam where communal violence has declined by 340 per cent. According to the confidential report of the state Home Department there were only 367 major and minor communal incidents there in 1981 as against 1,613 in 1980. Similarly, the number of communal murders has also declined from 194 in 1980 to 31 in 1981. The report, however, cautions: "The revival of the agitation has vitiated the atmosphere and the communal situation may worsen in 1982."

Bad Record: Policemen, on their part, seem to be doing their duty badly. According to an unofficial estimate over 35,000 criminals escaped the law's arms in the last two years—over 40 per cent of murder and dacoity cases remain unsolved. In Delhi alone, 3,684 proclaimed offenders have been evading arrest. Some have been left alone because of pressure from political bosses. The Delhi Police has not been able to solve as many as 58 murder cases in the last two years—among them the cold-blooded killings of a Delhi University student and a housewife—and according to sources, in 32 cases, even the identity of the culprits has not been established.

When the criminals are handcuffed and brought to book, they stand a good chance of getting away. A Home Ministry study says that over 40 per cent of the accused in cases of murder, rape, robbery and dacoity are not convicted. The study holds the state machinery responsible for not providing strong investigation set-ups and also blames the judiciary for not pushing the cases through quickly enough. The number of murder cases in courts has gone up from less than 90,000 in 1970 to 4 lakh in 1980. Says Union Home Minister Giani Zail Singh: "Delay in securing exemplary punishment for the criminals encourages new ones to join this tribe."

Extra Posts: The tribe of policemen is also swelling. Over 1.5 lakh men were recruited in the last 24 months, and the annual budget for the nation's 12 lakh lawmen grew by 25 per cent. Over 200 senior posts were created to accommodate Indian Police Service officials—in Delhi, former police commissioner P.S. Bhinder's tenure saw the birth of three posts of additional police commissioner, six of deputy police commissioner and over 20 of assistant police commissioner—all for those who stood by him during the Janata regime. Twelve state governments sought the Centre's approval for an additional post of director-general of police, along with the usual inspector -general of police.

However, all this brass doesn't seem to have halted the crime graph in its remorselessly steady climb to the top. Opposition leaders conveniently charge the ruling party with fostering criminality in the country. Asserts H.N. Bahuguna, chairman of the Democratic Socialist Party: "When criminals become politicians and join the ruling party, law and order become their obvious victims." Law and order in India seems a tall order, at least for the present.

—PRABHU CHAWLA

BHAWAN SINGH

S.B. Chavan, Mrs Gandhi, Pranab Mukherjee, M.S. Swaminathan, Manmohan Singh at the NDC meeting: soothing words

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DIPLOMACY

Soviet Tour De Force

IF EVER the US contemplated launching a sneak attack on the Soviet Union, they could hardly have been presented with a more opportune moment than last fortnight. In fact, it looked very much like the Soviet Union was invading India when a matched pair of behemoth AN-62 aircraft trundled over the tarmac at Palam Airport and sighed to a stop in the heavily-guarded VIP area. Out from the cavernous depths emerged what, at first sight, resembled the joint Services brass band but turned out to be a veritable Who's Who of the top hierarchy of the Soviet military machine.

Leading the invasion force was Marshal Dmitry Fedorovich Ustinov, 74, the craggy-faced Soviet defence minister resplendent in a mustard green uniform encrusted with medals like barnacles on a neglected ship. Ustinov's entourage included General Shavanov, the deputy defence minister, Admiral Sergei Gorshkov, the Soviet naval chief and one of the most highly-decorated men in the Soviet defence forces; Marshal Koutakhov, the air force chief and an impressive assortment of 30 lieutenants-general and majors-general. In fact, the only missing link was the Soviet army chief Marshal Ogarkov and the omission was only because Ustinov and Ogarkov, who is head of the Soviet armed forces, never leave the country at the same time.

The fact that there was more brass on display than at Moradabad was not the only surprise on the day of the generals. It was the first time that Ustinov had made an appearance in a country outside the socialist bloc. It was also the first time that Moscow had dispatched such a high-powered delegation to any country and left itself so militarily vulnerable.

Despite that, however, the Ustinov visit was shrouded in utmost secrecy. In mid-February, India's ambassador in Moscow, V.K. Ahuja, flew into Delhi for hasty consultations with the prime minister to finalise dates for the visit. Both the Foreign Ministry and the Defence Ministry were kept in the dark. The only clue they had was when they were asked to arrange a junket for all the foreign military attaches based in Delhi. Accordingly, two IAF aircraft with the attaches aboard took off from Delhi barely hours before Ustinov and his entourage arrived. The only attache missing was the US military attache who dropped out at the last minute. The junket, labelled a "sight-seeing trip" of Cochin and Trivandrum, returned to the capital a few hours after the Soviet delegation took off for Moscow.

Soviet delegation arriving: brass blitz

Short Notice: It was also, in some ways, very much a sneak attack. Ustinov's unexpected arrival at surprisingly short notice was in reponse to an invitation extended to him five years ago by the then defence minister Jagjivan Ram during his Moscow visit in 1978. In fact, it was obvious the Indian Government was caught napping by the timing of the visit since the air force chief, Air Chief Marshal Dilbagh Singh was away in London and was forced to cut short his trip while the army chief, General K.V. Krishna Rao, was scheduled to leave on a well-publicised tour to Paris right in the middle of the Soviet visit.

The reasons for Ustinov's terribly belated acceptance of the Indian invitation were obvious. For one, the Soviets had no desire to send a man of Ustinov's stature—he currently ranks number four in the Soviet hierarchy—during the Janata rule since it would have irritated Mrs Gandhi, a leader they are infinitely closer to and comfortable with. Additionally, India only acquired a full-fledged defence minister in the form of the affable R. Venkataraman last January and, with Mrs Gandhi scheduled to leave for Britain and Saudi Arabia, the Soviet leadership obviously felt that this was the best time. The unspoken fact that India has lately displayed signs of curing its obsession with Soviet defence equipment must have also figured in Moscow's calculations.

In that context, Ustinov's bland st ment that he was only here to "re personal contacts" only formed part o larger picture. The visit was, in the w of a Defence Ministry source, a "massiv exercise", probably the biggest the So have attempted in recent times and, fro accounts, a highly successful one.

Star Soldier: The star of the show undoubtedly Ustinov himself. A b hearty individual sporting rimless specta Ustinov was described admiringly by a army officer as a "soldier's soldier" an a Defence Ministry official as a "consum politician". In fact, he was very mu cocktail of the two as was evident through his week-long tour of defence llations.

In Jodhpur, at the sprawling Mi and MiG-23 base, Ustinov was visibly ciative of the IAF's skills shown at a d stration and insisted on chatting to the and inquiring from them through his preter how they liked the MiG's perform He was equally at home chatting to anics, technicians and an air force disp rider, particularly the last-named Ustinov is a motorcycle freak and o 30horsepower BMW. He spent consider time comparing the merits of Soviet and then ca cycles and the dispatch rider's Royal En

On a side trip to Agra to see th Mahal, he broke away from the grou the consternation of the security pe joined a group of schoolchildren picnic on the lawns. While the rest o

MEDIA

Nation Heralde

INDIAN diplomats serving ab must be the most hard-worked m bers of their globe-trotting munity. Not only do they have to ke tricolour flying, file endless repor triplicate and make sure nobody the silver, but they also have the on task of wading through the *Nat Herald* every week to en ruling party's latest line coin the one they are busy propaga

In fact, the External Affairs Mi indirectly seems to be making a v effort to keep the Congress(I) mouth from drowning in a sea of red i contributing an incredible Rs 1.43 every year to the paper's coffers by w subscriptions. More incredible, th nual subscription bill the ministry p the *National Herald* is almost 40 pe of its total annual budget for periodicals which is Rs 3.43 lakh.

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entourage waited, Ustinov entertained the children between bites of their sandwiches and then, in a spontaneous display of gallantry, presented the delighted schoolteacher with a necklace.

Boundless Energy: His most masterful performance, however, was reserved for Babina, which houses the armoured corps and the largest number of Soviet T-72 tanks. He is a soldier and he knows that for a soldier the most important thing is faith in his fighting equipment," says an Indian army officer who accompanied the entourage. Displaying energy that belied his considerable age, Ustinov mixed freely with officers and jawans, asking them if they had any problems with the tanks or with spares and complimenting them on their maintenance. He revelled in making unscheduled visits, first to the house of an officer to see how the Indian Army lives, and then a surprise visit to the jawan's *langar* to see how they eat.

In the *langar*, he had the jawans guffawing at his antics, particularly when he examined a bench at the dining table and asked how many people it accommodated during meals. On being told it held four jawans, he shook his head as if in sympathy and then called three of his stoutest generals and ordered them to join him on the bench. Naturally, it proved a tight squeeze for just three and wagging his finger at the cook, he said, "only three" and then pantomimed to the watching jawans that his officers ate too much. As a finale, he ordered the cook to serve him *langar* food which he then proceeded to consume with obvious relish.

Later, at a luncheon in his honour, he charmed the officers, wives by making a little speech prepared specially for them. "You have a great deal to do with keeping up the morale of the Indian Army," he said gravely and then, with a mischievous twinkle added, "you can nag him as much as you like when he gets home but make sure you give him a good dinner."

Exchanging Compliments: Ustinov's back-slapping *bonhomie* and quick-wittedness was soon being shared by his more proper colleagues. On a visit to Bombay, the Soviet naval chief, Admiral Sergei Gorshkov applauded the loudest when the western naval chief, Admiral Awasti, delivered his welcoming speech in fluent Russian. At the end of the speech, when Awasti told Gorshkov that he must come again to India, the latter replied: "Only when I can deliver a speech in Hindusthani."

Despite the hectic schedule, Ustinov and his beribboned party made a point of flying back to the capital almost every day of their visit. Wherever they went, they made a point of eating Indian food and drinking Indian liquor, particularly gin which probably came closest to their standard vodka fare. Ustinov also used his own aircraft for most of the trip except on occasions where the airfield was too small to accommodate it. On a visit to Khajuraho to view the erotic art of ancient India, Ustinov used the IAF's VIP Boeing while his visit to Babina was accomplished via IAF Soviet-made helicopters.

But right through his tour, he made three major points in his discussions with defence officers. One was that the Soviets do not merely say things unless they are prepared to back them up with actions. Secondly, that Indo-Soviet friendship and defence cooperation was not directed against any other country and lastly, that the Soviets knew how the Indian mind, particularly that of the soldier, worked. He did also make one more important point confidentially; that he realised it was indirectly because of the Soviet presence in Afghanistan that there was an infusion of arms into the subcontinent and the formation of a Washington-Beijing-Islamabad axis was of potential danger to India. In that context, confided Ustinov, the Soviets would like to see India strong enough to defend itself and would cooperate towards that as much as possible.

Though no defence deals were signed during Ustinov's visit it is evident that the elaborate foundations of future deals involving more advanced MiGs, tanks and battleships, were laid and unofficial commitments on both sides given. Considering the heavy Soviet involvement in India's defence infrastructure and the steady deterioration of relations between India and the West, particularly the US, Ustinov's visit was a masterful diplomatic and image-building exercise and in conjunction with its timing, is probably creating considerable ripples across the globe in Langley, Virginia.

—DILIP BOBB

National Herald's international weekly: subsidised?

International Weekly

NATIONAL HERALD

Founded by Jawaharlal Nehru

INDIA LIFTS VEIL IN LONDON

Massive show of heritage

Images: old and new

by Han Jasingh

Know India more?

-PM's advice to non-residents

According to a list submitted to Parliament last fortnight the ministry subscribes to 1,000 copies every week of the *National Herald* international weekly, a tacky, badly-produced collection of its reportage over the week to educate its representatives abroad. But even that seems like overkill because since there are only 150-odd Indian missions operating, it works out to around seven copies of the paper for each mission. Even Indian diplomats hardly deserve that kind of enforced labour. The ministry also subscribes to the *Hindu*'s international edition and picks up 1,000 copies every week at an annual cost of Rs 52,000, almost one-third the price it pays for the *National Herald*'s literary offering.

Varied Fare: Judging by the list, our Indian missions abroad must have rather juvenile literary tastes since the largest number of copies of any periodical bought is the *Shankar's Children's Art Number* (1,400 per year) at a total annual cost of Rs 60,500. Following closely behind are the *National Herald* and the *Hindu* (1,000 copies a week each), while way back in the pack is *Book Review* (200 copies) an erudite New Delhi bimonthly from the *Mainstream* stable, *Illustrated Weekly* (102) *Seminar* (120), *Kalaskhetra* (100) and *Cinema Vision* (100) while the literary stragglers are *Dharmayug* (60) and *Business India* (35). INDIA TODAY is conspicuous by its total absence.

The list also indicates that our embassies are inundated with a richly varied reading fare ranging from *Marg*, the cultural quarterly brought out by the Tata group to such obscure journals as *man & Development*. However, their annual contribution to the *National Herald* could be classified as part of their emergency relief fund.

—DILIP BOBB

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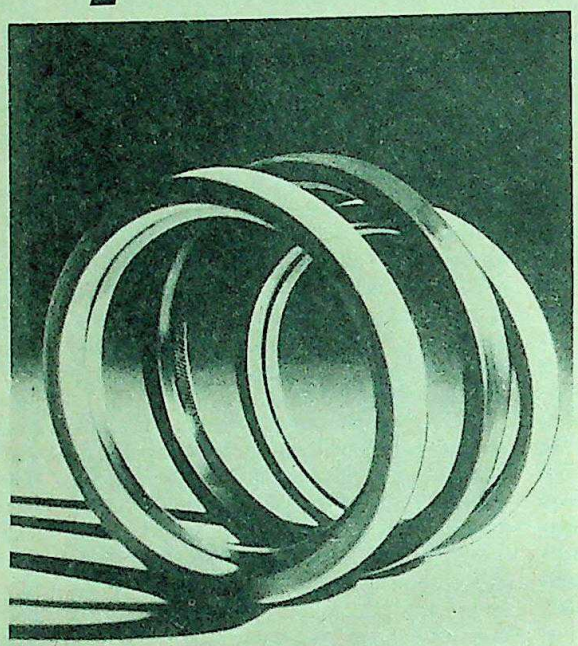

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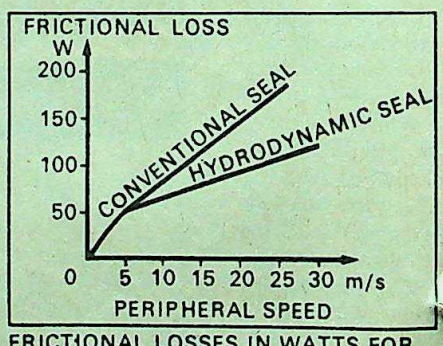

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UTTAR PRADESH

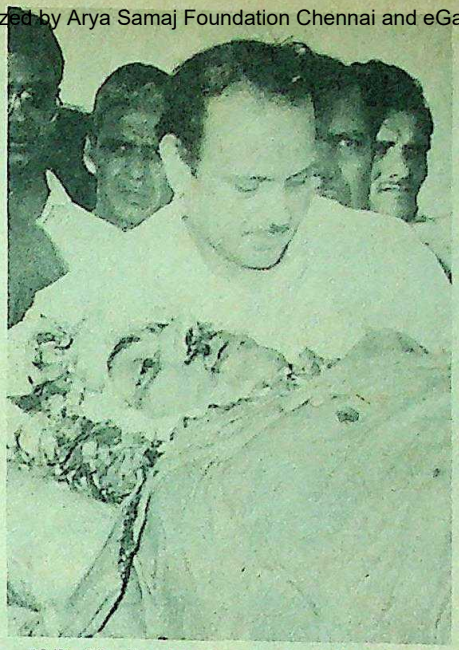
Murder ..Most Foul

AS THE open jeep halted at a barricade in Bargarh forest on the border of Allahabad and Banda district last fortnight, the silence of the night was suddenly shattered by the rapid clatter of gunfire. The shots killed Chandra Shekhar Prasad Singh, 53, a senior judge of the Allahabad High Court and his 15-year-old son Ajit Pratap Singh. A younger son, Vikram, 13, Mahendra Pratap Singh, the "Yuvraj" of Shankergarh, two attendants and the driver were wounded.

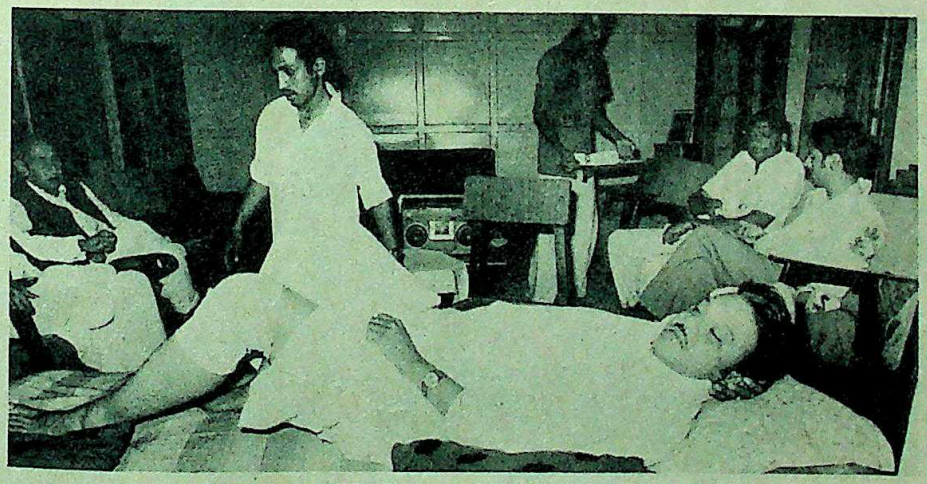
What continues to baffle the crack Central Intelligence Department team and police experts investigating the murder is whether the killing was premeditated and the victims personally known to the assailants or whether it was a chance encounter in which all the eight occupants of the ill-fated jeep were ambushed having been mistaken for a police party by a local gang of dacoits. A detailed interrogation of eye witnesses and a step-by-step reconstruction of the crime has provided the police with substantial motivations for each of the conflicting theories.

Evening Drive: Both the judge and Mahendra Pratap Singh were fond of week-end shoots and had apparently gone for an illegal "poach" in the protected Bargarh forest. Neither of them had bothered to obtain a shooting permit. Singh, however vehemently denied that they were hunting and claimed they had simply gone for "an outing" at about 9 p.m. and "on the spur of the moment" had decided to take the dusty, rock-littered Bargarh-Manikpur forest track which is just off the main Allahabad-Banda metalled road. However, the fact that heavy firearms were being carried by the group (a licenced .22, a .243 rifle and a powerful .30 Springfield rifle all mounted with telescopic sights) suggests otherwise.

Singh had taken his jeep which had a fitted spotlight and they had driven for some distance when one of their tyres burst. After considerable delay in changing the tyre they decided to turn back. The judge was driving on the return trip. Around midnight, said Singh, at a point roughly 6 km from the main road they saw two stationary beams of what seemed to be extra-powerful torchlights facing them. When they stopped they also noticed that the road was barricaded by stones.



V.P. Singh with his murdered brother: conflicting theories



Mahendra Pratap Singh recovering at home: lucky to survive

As soon as they had halted someone shouted out a warning in Hindi "Ruk jao, bhagney ki koshish na karna." (Stop there and don't try to escape.) Suddenly there was a burst of gun-fire and the judge fell in the first volley. Ajit who tried to get off the jeep was hit by a second volley of shots.

Close Range: Three small chalk circles marked out by the police the next morning indicated that the assailants had taken cover behind the curving stone boundary to the right of the track closest to the driver and barely six feet away. Singh said it seemed as if the bullets were fired from both sides of the track and a few gunmen were possibly hiding behind shoulder-high shrubs on the left.

After the gun-fire stopped, Singh also heard one assailant tell another "Saley mukbir ne galat bataya, mar do usko" (The informer misled us, kill him) following which a solitary gun-shot was fired in the dark.

Meanwhile, all the occupants of the jeep were asked to get down and line up in front of the headlights. The three firearms were taken and two of the survivors searched for ammunition. They were then asked to leave immediately after the assailants had ordered them to switch off the jeep's headlights and cleared the barricade. Singh, in his FIR lodged at Mutthigang police station in Allahabad, stated that he saw some of the assailants well enough in the headlights of the jeep and would be able to identify them.

Dacoits' Revenge: The judge was the elder brother of Chief Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh. Hearing of the murder, the chief minister flew to Allahabad. The state's Home Minister, Swarup Kumari Bakshi, arrived a few hours later and issued a press statement saying that the recent intensification of the anti-dacoity drive in Uttar Pradesh might have provided the provocation for the killings in Bargarh forest. A top police official said it was likely that either Jagatpal Pasi's gang or Gaya Kurmi's gang, both having their hideouts in the Banda jungles, were involved in the murder.

An Opposition leader who wished to remain anonymous alleged that the Shankergarh House and the judge's family were involved in a property dispute which might also provide a clue to the assault. The two households are related and live opposite each other in the Katgarh area of Allahabad, he said.

The chief minister told INDIA TODAY in Allahabad that his elder brother, a prominent civil lawyer who was elevated to the bench as a judge in 1970, had obviously "paid the price of my office". He described the murder as shocking but judging by the blanks the investigation has drawn so far, the real truth will stay buried in the dark forest.

—ANAND SAGAR

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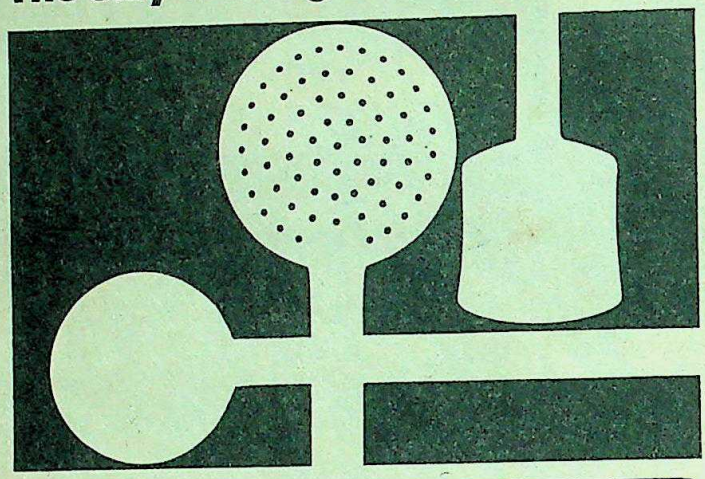

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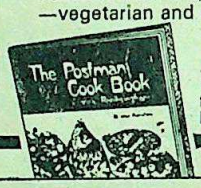

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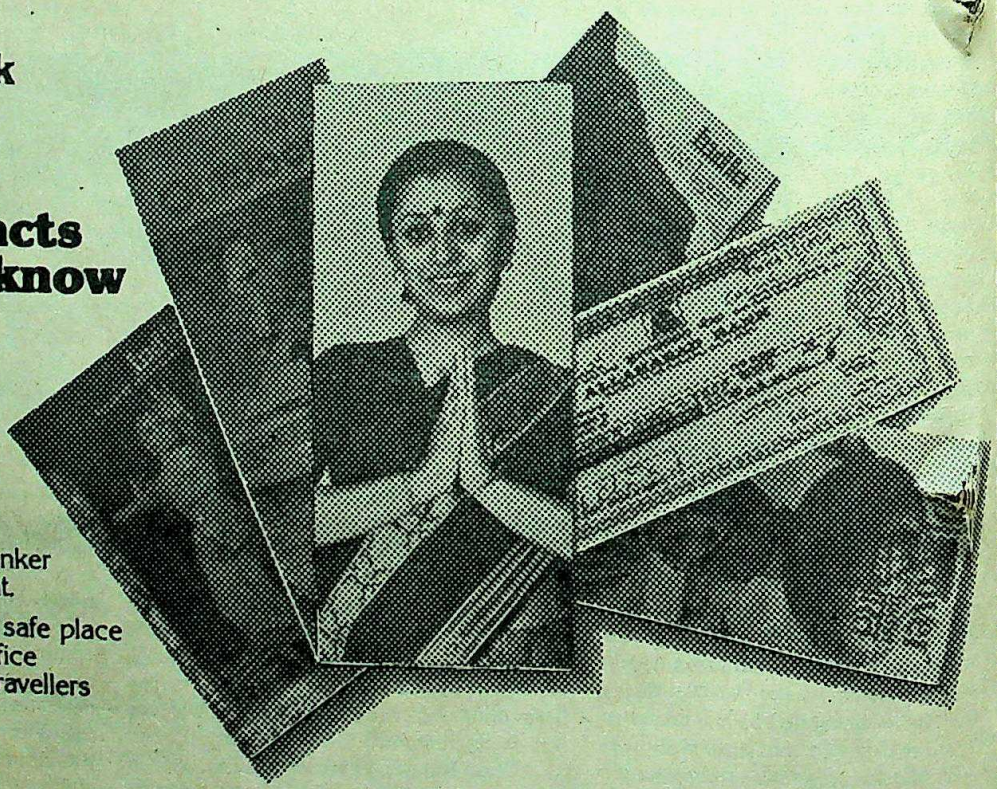

ALLAHABAD BANK
(A Government of India Undertaking)

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Gogoi (left) and Taimur: an undignified retreat from an untenable position

ASSAM

A New Uncertainty

A NEW uncertainty stalks Assam, already convulsed by three years of the unresolved agitation against "foreigners". Last fortnight's fall of the tenuous Congress(I) ministry led by Keshab Gogoi was not unexpected. But it was—coming even before the ministry could face the Assembly—an undignified retreat from an untenable position. In the normal process, Assam should go to the polls next year, but because the foreigners issue is inextricably bound up with the updating of electoral rolls, the state is destined to fester under President's rule for some time.

Assam could have been spared another spell of President's rule if the Centre had decided to provide an opportunity to the Opposition Left Democratic Front to form a ministry when it became clear that the Congress(I) did not enjoy a majority in the present 117-member state Legislature. The Opposition Front clearly enjoyed the much-needed strength with 62 members in the House, but Governor Prakash Mehrotra on advice from outgoing chief minister, chose to dissolve the Assembly. Asked why he had made such a recommendation when it meant that even the Congress(I) would not be able to engage itself any more in the numbers game and try to form another ministry, Gogoi said: "I had no other alternative. If I did not make such a recommendation then the Governor would have had no other alternative but to allow the Opposition to form a ministry."

However, Gogoi said that he had made the recommendation with a heavy heart, not because it was against all democratic norms but because, "I feel sorry for the members of our legislature party, who have suddenly become ordinary people, who will not be paid their salaries any more and who will have to leave their official quarters". Gogoi, however, continues to occupy the chief minister's official bungalow, just as another former chief minister Anwara Taimur, his principal opponent in the Congress(I), and who engineered his fall, still stays in the state guest house at Dispur.

Alliances: The Opposition is understandably sore and as its spokesman and a former chief minister Sarat Sinha (now a Congress (O) leader) said: "This is sheer fascism." He felt that this was an indication of how things will take shape in the future and prophesied: "I have no doubt that even if elections are held in the state, Mrs Indira Gandhi will see to it that they are rigged and her party returns to power." However, Sinha admitted that nobody was really thinking of elections at the moment and added that it was not sure whether the present alliance of the Congress(S), the two Communist parties, Janata and smaller Leftist groups would continue to hold their own at polling time, whenever that might be. Right now, however, the Left and Democratic alliance continues to hold good, tied together by the common slogan "fight authoritarianism", even though there are considerable differences in the constituents' approach to the foreigners issue, which they have stopped discussing for the moment.

In fact, not only these parties but people in general in the state do not seem to be bothered overmuch with the agitation having dragged on for three years. Last fortnight, there was not much visible response to the call for a renewal of the movement. The general opinion in Gauhati is that in the present battle of attrition the Centre is slowly coming out on top but while Mrs Gandhi may succeed in wearing out the All Assam Students Union (AASU) and the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP), she is not really solving the foreigners' problem.

Furore: Indeed, the foreigners issue is today being grabbed by established political parties to serve their own interests which have nothing to do with either the AASU or the AAGSP. One of the reasons why Gogoi lost support of a fair section within his party was his initiation of a process to identify Muslims who might have crossed into Assam from Bangladesh. Recently this caused a furore among the Muslims in the Congress(I) and two prominent leaders, Golam Osmani and Afzalur Rahman, left the party in protest against Gogoi's appointment by the High Command to head the new ministry. Gogoi himself, it is well known, supported his agitation friends with whom he is still in touch, but not directly.

While Gogoi and his friends may pat themselves on the back at having prevented the Opposition from forming a government and the latter on the other hand may feel pleased that at least the Congress(I) is no longer directly ruling the state, the ordinary man in Gauhati has become apprehensive once again with their taste of frequent spells of President's rule. The Assamese knows that he has no one to go to with his complaints. The Secretariat, which is crowded during periods of popular rule has again taken on its deserted look. The general fear is that with the reimposition of President's rule will return the high-handed tactics that the authorities had often resorted to in the name of maintaining peace.

—SUMANTA SEN in Gauhati

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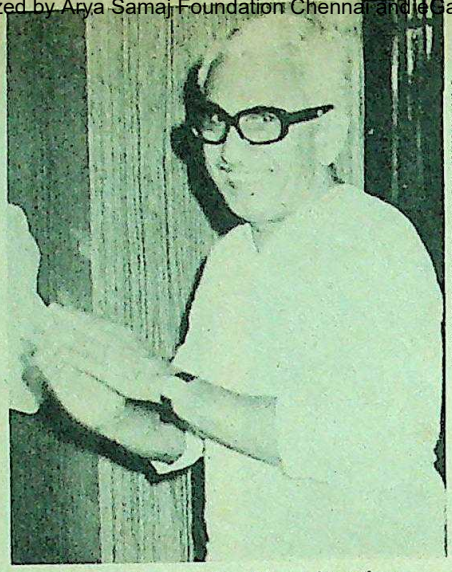
KERALA

Back To Square One

THE POCKET calculators are busy once again in Kerala. After Lonnappan Nambadan of the Kerala Congress-Mani (KC-M) crossed the floor last fortnight to bring down K. Karunakaran's United Democratic Front (UDF) ministry, the state's political parties are totting up their balance sheets for the next elections. Karunakaran's Congress(I)-led UDF had come to power on the strength of defections—he swelled his ranks from 41 to 70 in a couple of months—and it was perhaps fitting that a solitary defection brought down his fragile house of cards.

Nambadan, the soft-spoken, self-effacing schoolteacher-turned-politician who brought the Kerala ministry crashing down said that it was undemocratic to prop up a ministry that was surviving on the speaker's vote. He also said that his party, which stood for the farming community, was humiliated by the Centre's wrong import policy. A devout Catholic, Nambadan felt that he was being smoked out of the KC(M) by Bishop Kundukulam of Trichur. In the coming election he intends to stand from Trichur and "teach the Bible-toting bishop a lesson in his own town".



SHANKARAN KUTTY KERALA KAUMUDI

Karunakaran after his resignation

According to political pundits Nambadan would not have defected had his mentor K.M. Mani been in Trivandrum. Mani who was in New Delhi was to be received at the airport by Nambadan but at the scheduled time of arrival he was at Bhawan along with opposition leaders prising the Governor of what has turned to be one of the neatest *volte-faces* in tempestuous history of Kerala politics.

Empty Claims: Ironically, on the da Nambadan's defection Karunakaran assured Mrs Gandhi in New Delhi that would carry the show through the bud session. It was decided that only after session would Karunakaran tender his signation and form a caretaker governm till the elections. Karunakaran was inform of Nambadan's defection at Cochin on afternoon he arrived from New De Curiously, instead of rushing Trivandrum, the chief minister motored Guruvayoor to get the blessings of L Krishna and then returned to the s capital. Forty-two hours after being ini med of the defection, Karunakaran tende his resignation.

Along with the resignation came claim that one member of the Opp tion, whom he would not name, offered to support the UDF, but that he not want to carry on an administrat backed by defectors. Scoffed E.K. Naya former chief minister and leader of Opposition: "It was Karunakaran's imagination at work to cling to power."

With the Assembly dissolved the

SALINITY

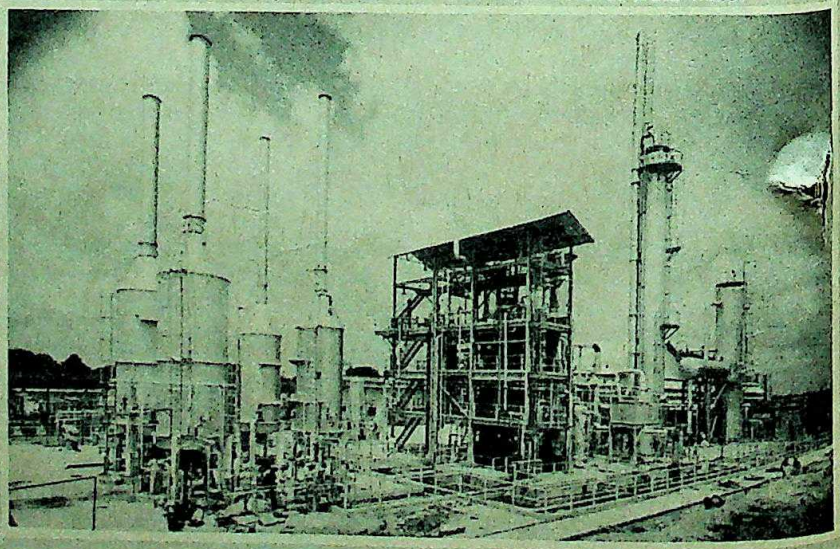
Seasickness

THE PERIYAR river in Kerala, a prime source of fresh water for the vital Ernakulam-Alwaye industrial belt, is being invaded by saline water, forcing industries to shut down. Public sector undertakings such as the Fertilisers and Chemicals Travancore Limited (FACT), Indian Rare Earths and Hindustan Insecticides, and private sector plants such as Premier Tyres have closed shop to prevent any more damage to their machinery. The production loss is Rs 15 lakh a day at present, and the increasing salinity threatens the jobs of more than 5,000 workers.

The waters of Periyar also supply Cochin and surrounding areas with about 27 million gallons of drinking water, and the salt content in the potable water distributed in the city has gone up from 10 parts per million (ppm) to 100 ppm. A Public Health Engineering Department official said that water with a salt content up to 300 ppm was safe. But the situation is worsening day by day, mainly because there were no Shivaratri showers, which usually occur at the end of February. The state has had no rains since last November and in one day recently, the Arabian Sea invaded Periyar, raising the salinity from 215 ppm to 436 ppm.

Costly Delay: Another reason is that FACT was not able to build bunds in time along the Periyar to keep saline water out—which it does annually at a cost of Rs 8 lakh. The work used to be over by December, but this year it dragged on until the end of March. Opposition from local residents, demands for compensation from ferry boatmen for the work lost for the three months the bunds would

The FACT factory at Ernakulam: closed for lack of fresh water



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SHANKARAN KUTTY KERALA KAUMUDI

Nayanar (right) and Nambadan

udget will have to be passed by Parliament. lections to the Rajya Sabha will have to be ostponed till the Assembly elections which re likely to be held in mid-May. In the eanwhile, the entire focus has been shifted the election. Battle lines have been drawn nd poll strategies are being worked out by e rival fronts headed by Karunakaran and ayanar.

Both the fronts are confident of victory. id Karunakaran: "We will get an absolute majority in the next election. There will be no problem regarding the seats as they are being worked out." Said A.K. Antony: "We will get the seats. It will be a landslide victory." From the opposing camp, P.C. Chacko, Antony's one-time confidant and now Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (S) (KPCC-S) president, countered: "The casting vote ministry that Antony supported became the laughing stock of the country. We, the LDF (Left Democratic Front), will get a majority due to this factor alone."

Hindu Renaissance: The coming poll will probably be one of the most bitter communal elections to be held in Kerala. The state is in the grip of a Hindu renaissance and the party being wooed most assiduously is the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which along with the Rashtriya Swyamsevak Sangh (RSS) is growing rapidly in influence. Says a leading politician: "Unless the Hindus unite, Christians and Muslims will be given preference in the name of minorities. It has come to a point when Hindus feel that only a communal party will safeguard their interests."

The strength of the growing Hindu lobby will be judged on April 4 and 5 when 6 lakh Hindus converge at Cochin for the Vishal Hindu Sammelan. It is little wonder then, that the most sought after politician in the state is the BJP's O. Rajagopal. Though

exist, and a demand for higher price for sand from the local panchayat were the main hurdles. The panchayat even delayed the sanction for a dredger from Alleppey, 40 km away.

FACT's future plans are also threatened. Asserts General Manager K.P.K. Nair: "The prestigious Rs 150-crore caprolactam plant which is waiting for cabinet clearance may never come off, and this will be a great blow for Kerala." At present FACT requires 100 tonnes of fresh water an hour; with a new plant, an additional 120 tonnes an hour will be needed. Now engineers are engaged in laying pipes to distant wells so that at least one unit of the existing plant could be re-started.

There was a proposal to release water from the nearby Neriyamangalam hydel reservoir to push the saline water back into the sea, but, as a Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) official said, "With no sign of rain, the water level at the reservoir is just enough to generate power for another 40 days." According to G.K. Pillay, plant manager at Premier Tyres, the only long-term solution is the Idamalayar hydro-electric project. After this, says Pillay, "Even during summer there will be plenty of water to stop salinity from the Arabian Sea."

Incomplete Project: However, the Idamalayar project, taken up five years ago, is still not complete because of labour problems. According to Vayalar Ravi, former MP and trade unionist, the KSEB is dragging its feet because some of their engineers are allegedly on the payroll of the contractors. Another suggestion to solve the problem is to have a regulator-cum-bridge at Manjumel and another regulator-cum-lock at Pachalam, close to the industrial units.

Dead fishes have been found floating in the Periyar, but experts assert that this is not the fault of the salt. Dr C.T. Samuel of the Department of Industrial Fisheries says: "Salinity by itself is not an environmental problem because Kerala experiences this every year and fresh water fishes can always swim further up the Periyar lake." The industrial units, however, cannot escape in this manner. Samuel fears that the saline water will reach deeper into the interior. In that case, the farmers will join FACT and Premier Tyres in praying for fresh water when the irrigation channels fill up with the saline danger. —SREEDHAR PILLAI

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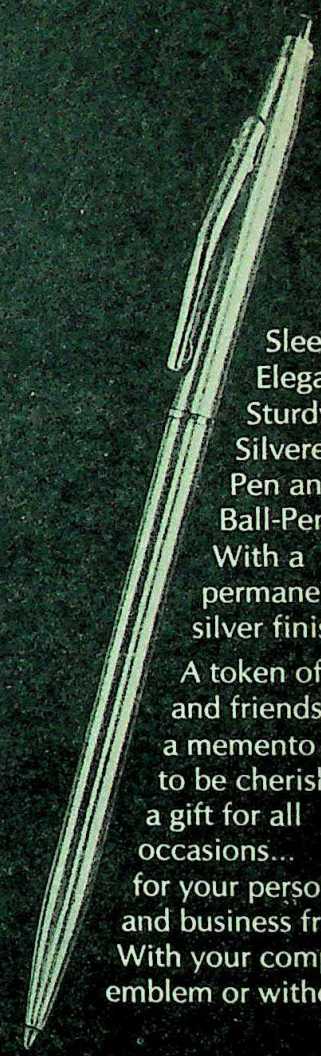

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Karunakaran vehemently denied having any truck with the BJP according to sources the latter will have an understanding with the National Democratic Party (NDP) and the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP). The BJP, however, is silent on the subject.

Sources also allege that as BJP influence has grown in Mala in the Trichur district thereby endangering Karunakaran's own seat, he is trying to work out a deal on seat adjustments with them. Karunakaran himself, it is said, will contest from the Nemom constituency in the Trivandrum district, held by the Congress(I). The majority population in this constituency are the Nadars, an economically backward community.

Interestingly enough, the last decision taken by the Karunakaran ministry was to restore the 3 per cent job reservation for Nadars, which had been scrapped by a previous government. Said a disgusted Govinda Pillai, Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) theoretician: "Caste and communal politics of the lowest kind will ruin Kerala." Replying to this, Antony charged: "The Marxists think that if the communal parties are with us they are reactionaries and if they stand with the Marxists they are secular democratic minority parties."

The problems of the UDF, a conglomeration of 10 disparate parties, are arising from within as well as from without. With 2,000 aspirants fighting over 140 seats it is torn apart by factionalism. The two factions of the Kerala Congress are at loggerheads. While the NDP are fighting the economic reservations, the RSP want the reservations to continue. The Antony-led group fear that Karunakaran will deny them the loaves of office after the election. The demand of Congress(I) loyalists who want to limit the seats given to Antony's group to 20 add credence to the fear. Watching this mêlée is the LDF with rising hopes of welcoming any disgruntled elements from Karunakaran's strife-torn camp.

—SREEDHAR PILLAI

HIMACHAL PRADESH

A Burning Question

THE OUTBREAK of fires in Simla's government buildings has long been a grim subject of conjecture and speculation. So it was hardly surprising that fresh controversy arose with the billowing smoke when the 40-year-old Kennedy Cottage, which housed the exiled government of Burma during World War II and was currently home to five government departments, went up in flames. Kennedy Cottage was reduced to ashes less than two months after another Simla fire, and a year after the Himachal Press burnt down. The historic building was the 20th to have been razed in this manner since 1957.

Curiously, all these fires have followed a suspiciously similar pattern, raising widespread doubts that they weren't accidental. The fires have always taken place after office hours and the prime casualties have often been controversial documents which, if they had become public knowledge, would have caused the concerned officials no end of embarrassment. The other great loss, of course, is the buildings themselves, many of them elegant structures put up by the British.

The burning of Kennedy Cottage was no exception to the string of oddly fortuitous fires. The power department which has its offices in the cottage is in the middle of a legal tussle with a construction firm, R.J. Shah and Company, over a contract that had been signed for the building of the Giri Bata hydel project. The project was completed by the department and the case is with the arbitrator. The important papers connected with the case are burnt in the fire though department officials claim some have been saved.

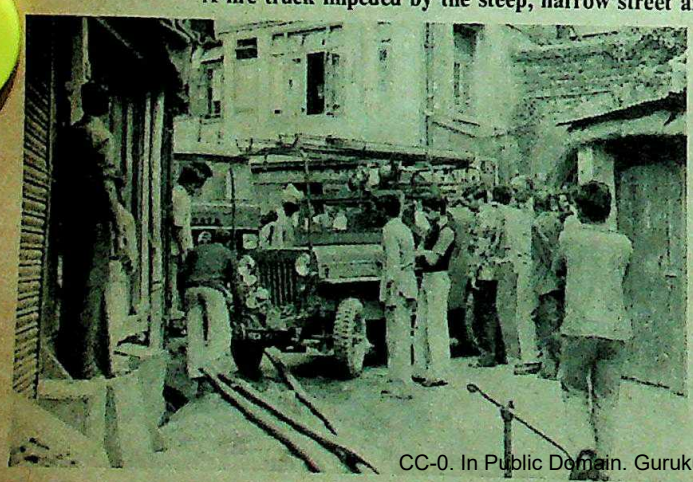
Controversy: An interesting twist is added by the fact that with the building burnt the records of about 15,000 applications for various posts. The posts had been adver by Kishorlal, the power minister in the vious Janata government, and the a cations had become a thorn in t flesh o present Power Minister Sukhram who been accused by others in the Congress(pushing his own candidates for the post vehement were the protests that C Minister Ramlal had already ordered Criminal Investigation Department (CI institute a probe.

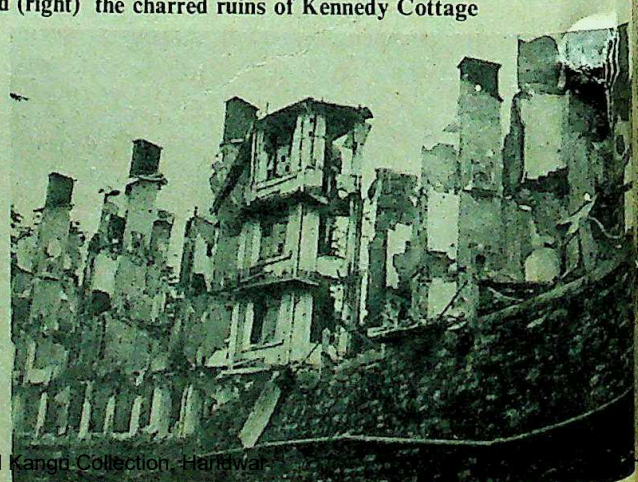
This is the second time that a min headed by Sukhram has been connected a fire. In 1979, when Sukhram was min of horticulture and agriculture, allega were levelled about certain questionable chases made by the ministry. Soon after rumours gathered force the building hou the ministry, Naubahar, was burnt to ground in a mysterious fire.

The other fires have been equally m terious with the committees of inquiry e not completing their reports or the rep not being made public. In 1957, in the fir the fires, Himachal Dham which was the secretariat was burnt down. With it destroyed documents which showed th volvement of powerful politicians in a shish scandal. Next was the old where the deputy commissioner's fil and with it allegedly, some inconvenient

Historical Importance: Two of Sim most historically important buildings twice been victims of fire. Kennedy Ho which is said to be the first structure bui the British, caught fire in 1966 and Snowden Hospital, near Sanjauli, which built by the Maharaja of Darbhanga was the summer residence of the Br commander-in-chief from 1885 onw was burnt in 1976 and again on Janu this year. The recent fire gutted an e wing of the building and equipment w

A fire truck impeded by the steep, narrow street and (right) the charred ruins of Kennedy Cottage





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Rs 1 crore was lost. The hospital had been marked for demolition earlier and the chief minister admitted that the equipment should not have been stored there in the first place. He was hesitant, however, in fixing responsibility for this negligence.

The other buildings which went up in flames make up an impressive list. The Himachal Pradesh University library was gazed in '75. The Government laboratory was gutted in '77, Talland House in '79, Raj Nivas, the Western Army Command offices and Himachal Press in '81. On the subject of the recurring fires Ramlal said: "We have not been able to establish any responsibility and thus there have been no punishments. We should have done it but we were more busy taking steps to prevent the fires."

Limited Success: The reasons for this limited success are not hard to find. Of the 900 fire hydrants in the town, only 100 are in working condition. New buildings, both private and government, are coming up in areas where firemen cannot reach easily and these have not been made fire-resistant. Even the seven-storey secretariat building is without adequate fire-protection. Buckets meant for sand and water are being used for waste paper. In the older buildings the wiring is faulty leading to short circuits and the paint on the wooden fixtures, inflammable.

The fire brigade, which was formed in 1972, has its own problems. Against the annual budget requirement of Rs 80 lakh it received only half that amount in the last financial year. According to Satish Kumar Dhesi and R.M. Baid of the fire department, there is no coordination between different wings of the service and this slows them down. There is no legislation to make non-compliance with fire prevention rules, a criminal offence. Even plans for the construction of a separate water supply and tanks have been put in cold storage. The state Government has asked the seventh finance commission to allocate Rs 7 crore for fire prevention measures. Till the money comes through and the plans are implemented, Simla stands in grave danger of being systematically razed to the ground.

—GOBIND THUKRAL in Simla

BARONESS VON KORIES

A Discreet Exit

THE whodunit drama starring Baroness Stefania von Kories and her missing jewels, that had started in the lobby of Delhi's Hotel Oberoi Intercontinental nearly three months ago (INDIA TODAY, February 15) ended last fortnight as dramatically as it had begun. After much tearful publicity over her missing jewels and a prolonged affair with the capital's cocktail and polo circuit, the Baroness packed her bags and quietly slipped out of the country last week without any fancy farewells and leaving behind no further clues as to the possible fate of her jewels.

Instead, the Baroness and her matched luggage mingled unobtrusivley with the other passengers on Air-India flight 129 as it prepared to transport her back to the familiar surroundings of her Paris *pied-à-terre*. Naturally, she flew first class but that was the only concession she made to her media image. In stark contrast to the publicity she willingly attracted when the case first hit the headlines last January, her leaving was discreetly done as were the formalities she had to complete before she could be allowed out of the country.

Futile Efforts: All her efforts to waive the customs duty she was required to pay on the lost jewels came to naught. With Delhi's police sticking stubbornly to their guns in not issuing the certificate acknowledging that the jewels had been stolen, the Baroness finally decided to pay up and leave. One day before her departure, she arrived at Customs House at Palam Airport and informed officials that she was prepared to pay the duty but not in cash. Instead, she left part of her fabulous collection of jewels valued at the exact amount the customs were demanding—Rs 26 lakh (her total jewellery had been valued at Rs 1.73 crore).

Baroness von Kories at a shopping arcade: a mystery remains

But as with everything else concerning the Baroness' ill-starred sojourn to India, even that proved a formidable task, involving the hasty recruitment of three of Delhi's top jewellers and two customs' evaluators. Sorting through the glittering collection, the experts finally picked a ruby necklace and a pair of ruby tops after hours of painstaking work. According to one of the jewellers involved in the evaluation, the pieces they picked were made at the world-famous New York jewellery firm of Van Cleef & Arpels.

Said a customs official: "We were acting under the powers of the Customs Act that entitles us to sums due to the Government." Once the jewels were picked out they were sealed in the presence of the Baroness and deposited in a State Bank of India locker where they will remain till the Baroness produces the Rs 26 lakh and reclaims the jewels she has left as surety. If she fails to do that within a specified period of time, the customs have the option of selling the jewels and recovering the money due to them. She also has the right to appeal against the detention of her jewels and that seems likely. Since it appears that the Baroness has decided to adopt a low profile, and in fact has done so ever since she stormed out of the Oberoi having indirectly accused them of the theft, and moved into a rival hotel just down the road.

Her quiet departure last week is no indication that the case of the missing jewels is closed. The Baroness is bound to return and raise the curtain on the second act of what remains one of the year's greatest mysteries. Reiterating this, said a police official; "The case isn't closed yet."

—ASOKA RAINA

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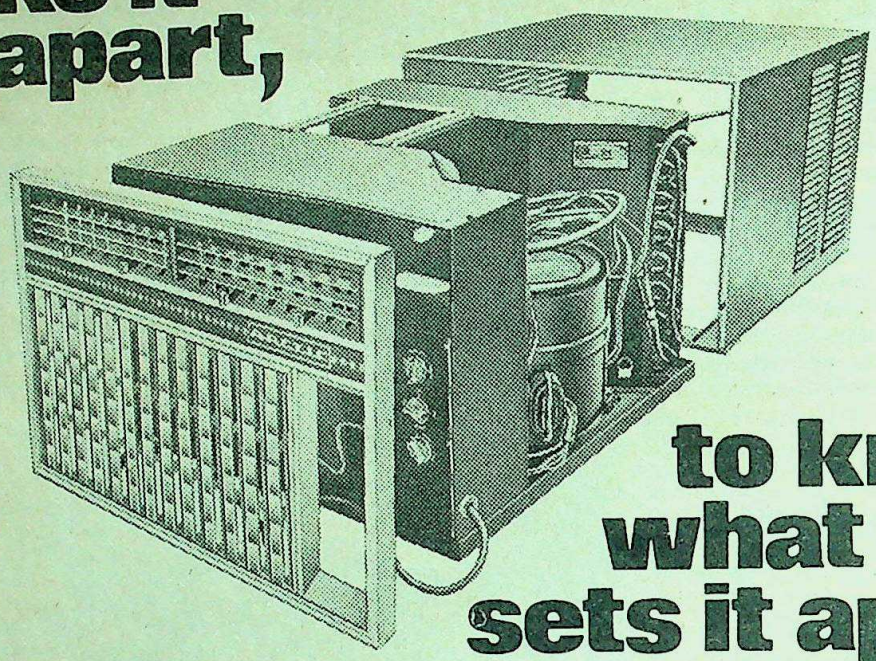

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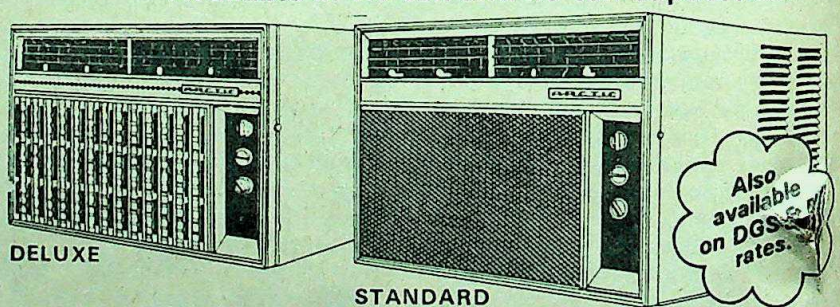

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MADHYA PRADESH

The Bureaucratic Jungle

CAN A project come to a standstill before it has actually begun? American Ambassador Harry Barnes Jr tried to figure out an answer to that question last fortnight when he made a two-day goodwill visit to Bhopal. Under focus was an ambitious social forestry programme for Madhya Pradesh, pegged at roughly Rs 25 crore, which simply refuses to get off the ground. The US Agency for International Aid (USAID) is contributing $25 million (Rs 22.5 crore) mostly in loan—while the state Government is to put up an equivalent sum.

Though the agreement was signed six months ago, not an iota of work has been done. It provides a good example of how not to plan and implement projects. The basic objective of the programme is to increase the supply of fuel wood, fodder, small timber and other forest products on community and private lands in rural Madhya Pradesh. Over six years the plan hopes to bring 63,500 hectares under social forestry. Most of the land used under the scheme will be marginal or degraded and 25 per cent of the current firewood requirements of 5,000 villages are expected to be met. What is more, an estimated 30 million man-days of employment will be generated during the project life.

While the statement of objectives is impressive, in the face of differences between the Forest and Finance deparments, the proposal means little. The debate is raging over the establishment of a social forestry directorate which is the very heart of the programme and will employ 3,300 people.

Departmental Tangle: The Forest Department currently has 440 people who are concerned with social forestry and the department is willing to deploy this group for the new programme. Finance, on the other hand, contends that the Forest Department, with more than 30,000 employees, can spare a substantially larger number for the directorate instead of hiring people from outside.

While a difference of opinion is hardly unusual, it is remarkable that an argument should take place at such a late stage. Says a forest official: "What were the bosses doing all this while? It was the obvious issue to be considered in the first place." But because someone slipped up, social forestry, which everyone swears by now, is languishing.

In fact, due to its erratic decision-making the state Government ran the danger of even losing the project at the initial stage itself. USAID required that a social forestry directorate be set up along with a management plan and an inter-departmental policy committee within 90 days of the agreement, failing which it had the option to terminate

GUFRAN-E-AZAM

Out Of The Dock

It was another of those affairs that the administration had tried to push under the rug. But how was it to know that the rug would catch fire? Last fortnight, just before the Madhya Pradesh Assembly rose for a week's leave before Holi, all hell broke loose over the withdrawal of a criminal case against a Congress(I) parliamentarian, Gufran-e-Azam. A former student leader who is known in Bhopal for his strong-arm methods, Azam, 39, was considered close to Sanjay Gandhi and Vidya Charan Shukla during the Emergency and is a former general secretary of the Indian Youth Congress.

The incidents that led to two cases being registered against Azam occurred on October 2, 1974 in Bhopal. The trouble arose following a clash between junior doctors of a local hospital and Youth Congress men during which a political worker was injured. Azam came and allegedly misbehaved with a doctor because he felt that the injured worker was not being treated properly. Angered by this, the medicos beat up friends of the patient, following which the then health minister Vimla Verma—who is presently minister for public works in Arjun Singh's Cabinet—and another minister arrived at the hospital to reprimand some senior doctors. This sent the medicos on the rampage again and a jeep was set on fire.

At around 10 at night some 300 to 400 armed men allegedly started in procession from Azam's house towards the hospital premises. A mild lathi charge by the police posted there broke up the demonstration, but in the mêlée three policemen fell into the hands of the mob. One of them was badly beaten, another was found unconscious with one hand broken and the third was knifed and had his head broken.

The incident did not end there. A doctors' strike and police dissatisfaction gave rise to cases against Azam and 24 others, with charges brought of attempt to murder, armed rioting, unlawful assembly, injuring a public servant on duty and kidnapping. Two ministers—Deputy Minister for Home Chandra Prabhash Shekhar and Deputy Minister for Public Works Kamla Kumari—and the vice-president of the Madhya Pradesh Youth Congress Vishnu Rajouria quit the Youth Congress in protest against the indiscipline and hooliganism prevailing in it.

Azam: friends in high places

RAJENRA JAIN

After the case was registered, Azam secured bail and a stream of summons sent by the court invariably failed to find him. Surprisingly, no warrant for his arrest was issued. Azam was finally arrested on June 11, 1978 but was bailed out again.

Sources in Bhopal suggest that the case was withdrawn under pressure from New Delhi. For one, there is not much love lost between Chief Minister Arjun Singh and Azam and, moreover, if Singh had in fact wanted to have it withdrawn he could have done so long ago. If this line of thought is correct, Singh, even though his own government is under attack, should be pleased with the amount of bad press Azam has received. Yet the case demonstrates that the courts can be helpless before the Government, and a seat in Parliament has proved to be more powerful than the magistrate's chair.

—SREEKANT KHANDEKAR

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the agreement. Fortunately for the state Government, the deadline was extended by another 90 days to March 31, but still nothing has moved.

Shifting Responsibility: Says the portly and bespectacled Forest Minister Vedram: "The Cabinet agreed to the proposal in principle before the agreement was signed and later it was approved, again by the Cabinet. At neither time did Finance raise an objection and how they are doing it now, I do not know." That no one wants to shoulder the responsibility for the delay is obvious because Finance Secretary Manohar Keshav denies outright that his department has a hand in the delay. Says he: "The Forest Department would know about its own problems."

According to the plan, the first two years will be devoted to building up the organisation and 15 districts are to be covered while another 14 districts are to be included in the four years that follow. But already the programme is dangerously behind schedule. The agreement calls for, among other things, the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation unit by June this year, the establishment of a planning and research unit by April this year and the development of a training plan also by June this year. Admits Forest Secretary Ranjit Singh, reluctantly: "Not much work has been done on any of these aspects of the programme." This is only the beginning.

The entire episode is dotted with cases of indecision. In the first place a decision on staffing the directorate should have been taken before the agreement was signed. Even if that was not done, six months is more than enough time for the state Government to make up its mind—but the question is, even if it does, there is bound to be another fateful gap before implementation.

—SREEKANT KHANDEKAR

WEST BENGAL

Suspected Sleuth

EVEN AS West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu was claiming in the Assembly last fortnight that the law and order situation in the state was the best in the country, a macabre drama was slowly unfolding up at the Calcutta police headquarters in Lalbazar centring round allegations of connections between a cop and dacoits. As the drama built up it exposed the city police force for what it is today—splintered into factions with demoralised officers seeking transfers elsewhere.

Occupying the centre stage position last fortnight, was Ashish Mukherjee, a veteran detective department officer and recipient of the President's Gold Medal, who had been accused of collusion with the very dacoits whom he was supposed to be hounding in his capacity as Officer In-Charge Dacoity (South). There were dark hints of Mukherjee having shared the spoils of bank robberies in the city and though he pleaded innocence Mukherjee was promptly removed from office. His contention that his job as a policeman naturally led to contacts with the underworld where he had his sources but that the relationship did not go any further were brushed aside. The chief minister made a strong statement in the Assembly which suggested that there was a prima facie case and that the officer might be suspended.

Transferred: Within 48 hours, however, there seemed to be a drastic change in the situation, and Mukherjee was merely transferred to another department. The story that came up the grape-vine was that Mukherjee had become victim of a conspiracy though the inquiry into his case is still continuing it has now been given much broader scope.

Officials of the Home Department explained that the Government had to proceed cautiously in the matter. As one of them said: "So far we have nothing against Mukherjee except what has been alleged by some people in custody, and we have to be careful about accepting statements made by people with criminal connections and also under duress."

From what has surfaced so far, the whole episode appears to be basically a story of petty rivalry in the detective department. The story doing the rounds in the corridors of Lalbazar is that another officer angling for Mukherjee's job, had got hold of four youths alleged to be involved in bank robberies, and forced them to "confess" that it was Mukherjee who had instigated them to commit bank robberies.

Developments: Meanwhile there have been other unexplained developments at the police headquarters. Deputy Commissioner, Kamalesh Roy of the detective department, was on leave during the Mukherjee episode and was transferred immediately on resumption of duties. It is well-known that Roy had not been getting along well with the Commissioner of Police Nirupam Som. It did appear that Som took advantage of the Mukherjee episode to decide on a spring-cleaning of the detective department. He removed the top man to start with—Roy was the second head of this depart to be removed in less than five years. T are now reports that another veteran cer of the department, an assistant co ssioner, is also seeking transfer. So point out that never before in its histor this vital department of the city police in such a sorry state.

The blame for this is being lai Som's door. In his zeal to get things mo Som has stepped on several sensitive Lalbazar has always been in the public right from the days when it master-mi the crackdown on the Nexalites and taste of controversy. This time it is all

Som (left front in glasses: treading on toes

that normal channels of command are bypassed as lower ranking policemen touch directly with Som whenever an happens instead of reporting to t mediate superiors. This, accord official, has had a demoralising effe senior police officials. Som, however, perturbed by the accusations. "I'm tryi get back into shape an organisation has suffered in the past because it has called upon to deal mostly with poli problems," says Som, "they seem to forgotten the force's normal law-kee operation." But the resentment is grad building up and with the latest crisis, bazar seems like it could do with some p keeping itself.

—SUMANT

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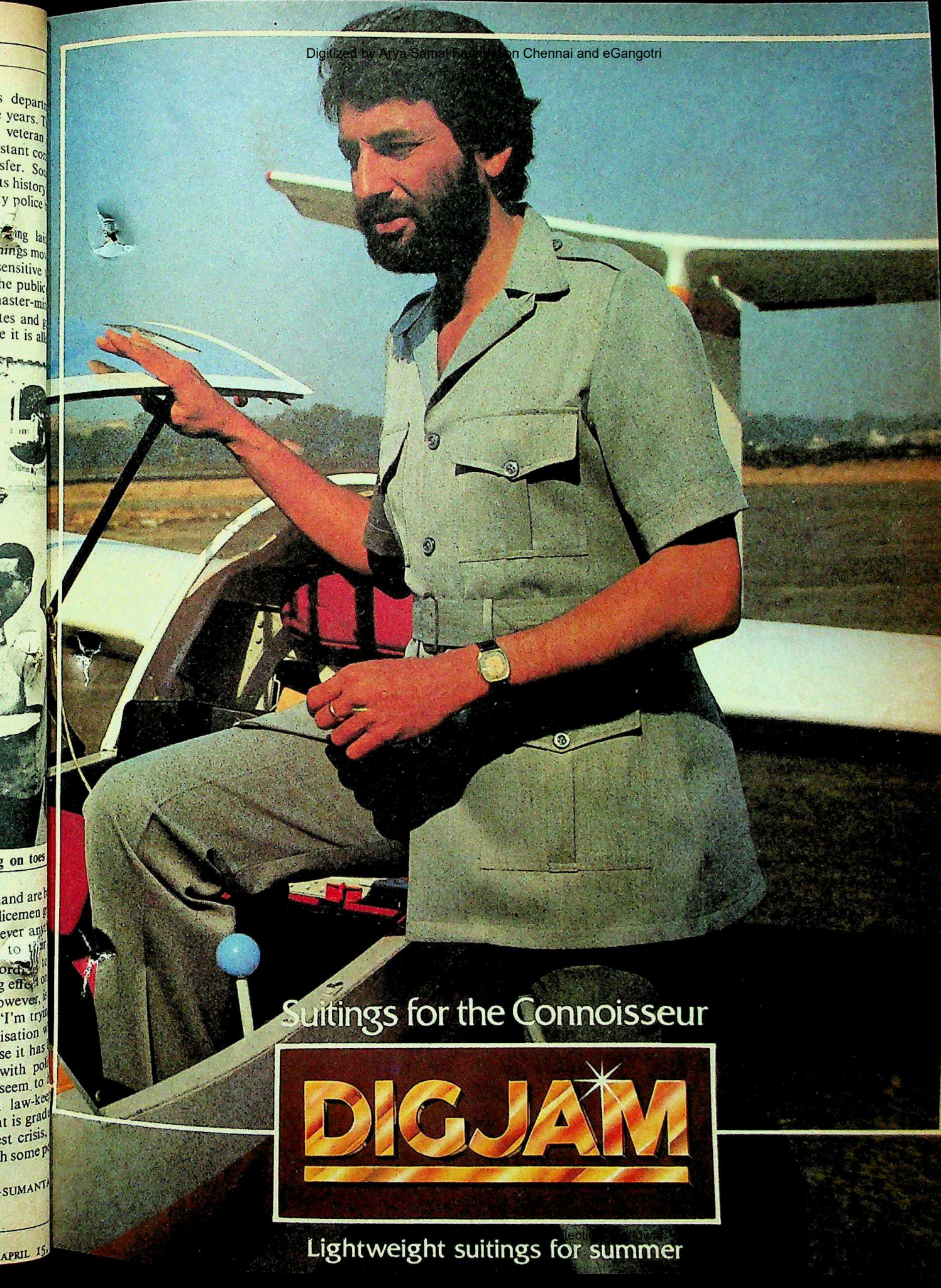

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WEST BENGAL

Realigning The Ranks

The CPI and the CPI-M, are forging stronger links in West Bengal. Ignoring the claims of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), an old ally of the Left Front, Chief Minister Jyoti Basu last fortnight allotted a Rajya Sabha seat to the CPI, a recent constituent of the Front.

The action clearly went against the previous formula in the allocation of the Rajya Sabha seats. Earlier, the Marxists, after taking their own quota, would distribute the remaining seats between the RSP and the Forward Bloc. This time, however, they set up candidates in three of the five vacant seats, left the fourth to the Forward Bloc and deprived the RSP of the fifth on the grounds that "if we continue to stick to the old formula then our latest ally, CPI, will never get any seats." The party also felt that though the CPI is relatively small in West Bengal, it is of some significance in the leftist array in the country taken as a whole.

Basu: a question of priorities

Basu's action triggered off a volley of protest from the RSP which described it as "unilateral and uncalled for". What is more unpalatable to the RSP is the fact that the CPI has only three seats in the state Legislature against RSP's 22.

Hostility: But with their eyes on the national scene, the Marxists cannot but help the CPI emerge as an important constituent of the West Bengal Left Front especially, since the older allies like the Forward Bloc and the RSP do not feature outside the state. What has further played into the Marxists' hands is the open hostility between the Forward Bloc and the RSP. Thus they are in a position to bring any unified pressure on the Marxists, which might have made it difficult for them to accommodate the CPI.

In fact, Basu is reported to have told a delegation of the RSP that he would be sorry to see them quit the Front over the issue of the Rajya Sabha seat, but that even if they did, it wouldn't affect his decision. The delegates got the message and prevailed on the more fire-brand sections of their party, reportedly led by Jail Minister Debabrata Bandopadhyay, not to press the issue to an extent which would lead to a parting of ways. Says a more pragmatic RSP minister Jatin Chakravorty: "Do you think we would be foolish enough to quarrel too much about one Rajya Sabha seat when there is the much bigger issue of Assembly seats to be settled?"

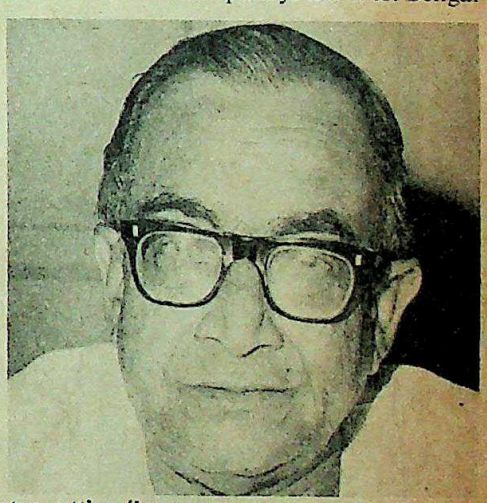
With tensions between the Forward Bloc and the RSP, and the Marxists on the increase, it is doubtful to what extent the Marxists would be prepared to make amends during the Assembly polls. The party secretary and chairman of the Left Front, Promode Das Gupta, has already made it clear that performances in the last election will not be the sole guideline in allotting seats. Obviously, it cannot be so if the CPI is to be accommodated in a big way, since it had fared badly in the 1977 Assembly elections.

Creating Trouble: More ominous for the old allies was Basu's address to his party legislators during last fortnight's short session of the state Assembly, when he was reported to have said: "Members of the RSP and the Forward Bloc may seek to create trouble for ministers belonging to our party and you should be prepared to tackle them." At no point during the last five years had Basu so openly asked his partymen to beware not only the Opposition but also those in the Front itself.

Today it is an acknowledged fact that with the Left Front sure to return to power resentment of the smaller constituents will continue to mount particularly over the distribution of portfolios. It is no secret that the Marxists will do their best to deny the Forward Bloc the portfolios of agriculture and cooperation and the RSP that of Panchayats which these parties currently hold. The Marxists feel they must themselves hold these portfolios for better coordination of development work in the rural areas and make no secret of their disappointment at the present performance of the Forward Bloc and RSP ministers in charge of their departments. It is also possible that if the CPI joins the new ministry then it may be given charge of some of these portfolios. This will only add insult to the injury of the RSP and the Forward Bloc. However, judging by present indications these parties are likely to swallow even such treatment although it will mean that their leaders will have to do a lot of explanation to their respective cadres.

The internal differences within the ruling Front however pale in comparison with the state of affairs in the Opposition camp. Even after weeks of parleys the West Bengal opposition parties could not agree on a single nominee for the Rajya Sabha seat which they could have bagged had they been united and as many as five nominations were filed on the last day for doing so, on March 17. Within the Congress(I) there are even reservations about the way in which the legal luminaries of the party were conducting the poll case against the West Bengal Government at the Supreme Court. Thus there are no signs of the intra and inter-party differences abating in the Opposition camp. These are sure to remain if not intensify when the state goes to the polls, probably in another two months.

—SUMANTA SEN



Bandopadhyay and Chakravorty: getting the message

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JAMMU & KASHMIR

Literary Licence

Two books are being read with particular attention today in Kashmir. The first is a compact little pamphlet called *Life of Sheikh Abdullah—An Open Book*. The second is *In The Crucible Of Judgement*, another neat booklet. The first is by Abid Hussain Khan of Hyderabad. The second is by Abdul Rashid. The two literary creations are the key weapons in a political squabble between the ruling National Conference and the opposition Congress(I).

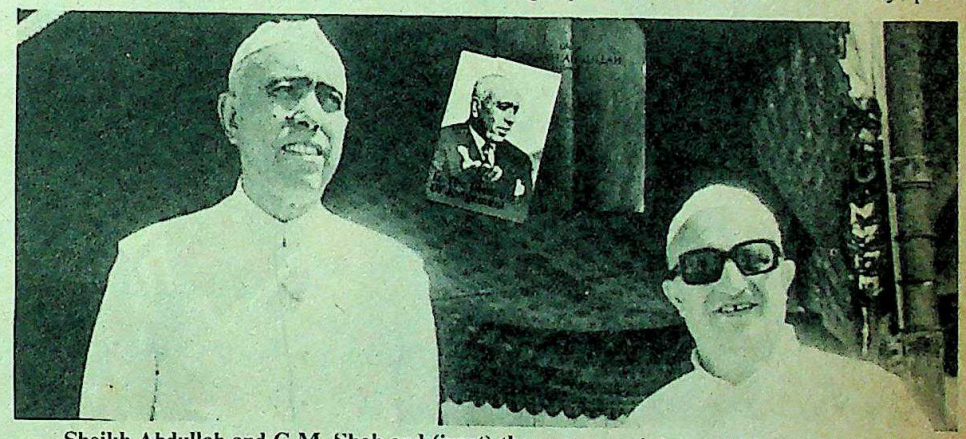
The man who is the focus of the political controversy, however, has chosen to keep aloof. Chief Minister Sheikh Abdullah, who bestrides the valley like an ageing colossus, lets underlinings reply to the pointed and neatly documented allegations made by Abid Hussain in his 'red book', which arrived just in time to make it to the current budget session of the Jammu & Kashmir Assembly. The pamphlet condemns the Lion of Kashmir for his "dark life, shady character and unscrupulous nature" , calling him the "richest fox of the state whose immovable assets are estimated to be worth more than Rs 20 crore".

Allegation List: The 34-page chargesheet uses a dozen photographs of property, and an equal number of copies of the concerned government orders to support its list of the chief minister's "misuse of official powers and political influence". Among the charges it makes are:

- The Sheikh allegedly acquired a large parcel of government land along with a three-storeyed building called Dhanji bhai, worth Rs 50 lakh for just Rs 4 lakh;
- The Sheikh's family home at Soura is rented for Rs 2,000 a month to the Sher-i-Kashmir Medical Institute Trust headed by the Sheikh;
- The family has encroached on government and forest lands adjoining farm land it owns at Tangmarg near Gulmarg;
- The Sheikh has promoted his family members keeping his youngest son Dr Mustafa Kamal as head of the Tangmarg district hospital for 14 years in violation of a rule which limits postings to three years, appointing son Tariq Abdullah to head the state's Tourism Development Corporation, appointing his wife to several government organisations, and his son-in-law G.M. Shah to several powerful positions, including the National Conference's Nawa-i-Subh Publications Trust which has acquired prime land in Srinagar for a annual rent of Rs 4.

The Sheikh's son Dr Farooq Abdullah and his British-born wife imported two foreign cars in 1975 allegedly as a donation to the Medical Institute without paying duty, but now have them for their personal use.

The pamphlet abounds in other allegations relating to bribes, selection practices and real estate deals. The driving force behind this carefully calculated mud-slinging is the Congress(I). Two local correspondents close to the party have written the red book in English, and the Urdu version has been revised by the secretary of a state-financed cultural organisation. The book is based on a series of articles written by the Sheikh's bitterest critic, the late Shamim Ahmed Shamim, in the daily *Aina* from 1977 to 1980.



Sheikh Abdullah and G.M. Shah and (inset) the controversial pamphlets: mud-slinging

The photostat copies of documents relating to land deals were fed to the writers by bureaucrats, which points to divided loyalties in the state bureaucracy. As of now; about 50,000 copies in English and 25,000 in Urdu are in circulation.

Rejoinder: The ruling National Conference has answered the fictitious Abid Hussain's charges in *Crucible Of Judgement*, written by the equally fictitious Abdul Rashid. "All these deeds," the rejoinder claims, "have been regularised under rules and approved by the Cabinet formally." The poorly-printed pamphlet abounds in phrases like "character assassination" and "distorted concocted stories". In particular, it denies that land at Gupkar allotted to Begum Abdullah is worth Rs 40 lakh or that the 44 kanals sold to the Sher-i-Kashmir Medical Institute are involved in any hanky-panky. As for the land leased to the *Nawa-i-Subh*, *Crucible* says that the step has been taken for "encouraging healthy journalism in the state".

Farooq Abdullah, the Sheikh's son was visibly agitated with the allegations printed in the red book. He told INDIA TODAY, "I or my father have nothing to hide. The red book is just another attempt to malign Sheikh sahib's character, it's another political game the Congress(I) have resorted to, hoping that with the mud-slinging some mud will stick." Commenting on the allegation concerning the import of cars, he adds, "I had spent my hard earned money to buy the cars when I bought them for £6,000 (Rs 1.08 lakh) and donated them to the Medical Institute. Now that no spares are available, they will be auctioning the cars and making money—the cars will easily sell for about a lakh of rupees each. The money will be the Institute's."

Says Dr Farooq, "The Congress(I) will not succeed in their attempt to malign us. I will bury them under their own 'red book'."

Predictably, opposition leaders have raised merry hell in the Assembly. Bhim Singh, president of the Panthers Party, placed on the table of the House nine government orders dealing with transfer and allotment of government land by "arbitrary orders of the government in favour of the wife, sons, brother-in-law and son-in-law of the chief minister". He demanded a probe. The Sheikh was away as the debate touched its height, and state Law Minister D.D. Thakur rejected the demand and said: "I am shocked to hear about such allegations against Sheikh sahib whom we consider above any kind of corruption."

The man in Kashmir's streets is used to hearing charges against his leaders. In fact, former chief minister Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad was convicted on 11 counts of corruption and six of abuse of authority. Redress is far off, but what is sure is that another book will soon hit the stands; as National Conference leader said: "We will soon come out with a bundle of black deeds perpetrated by the Congresswallas when they were at the helm of affairs."

—GHULAM NABI KHAYAL

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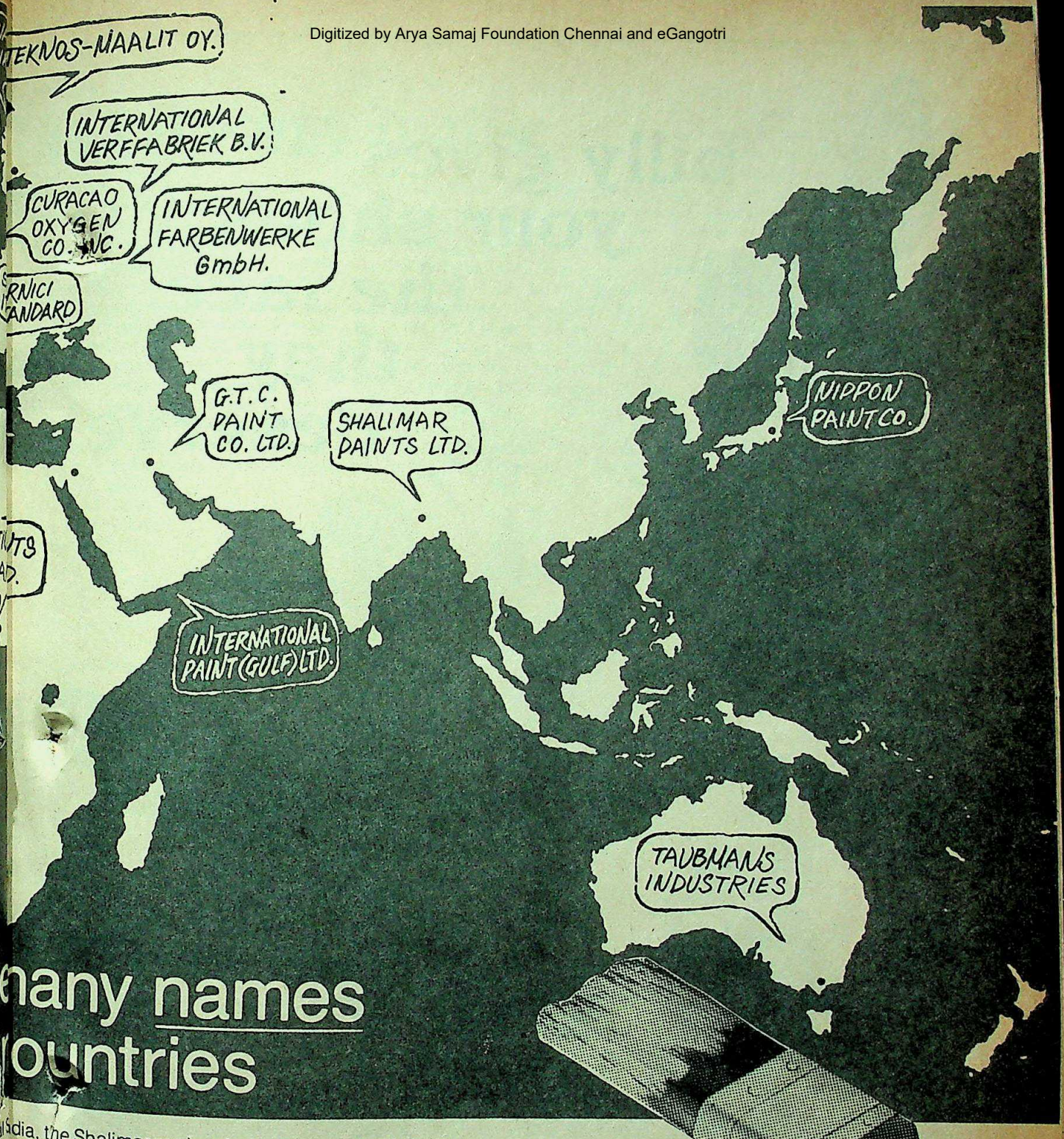

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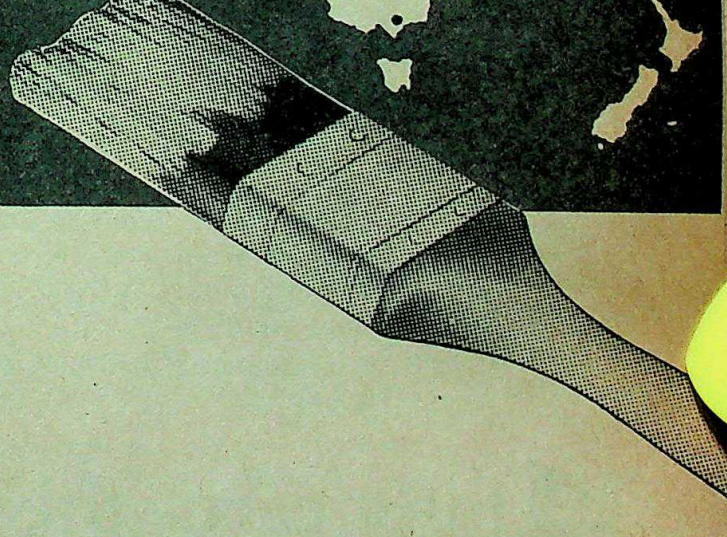

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SMUGGLING

The Two-way Traffic

IF smuggling is a word shunned by most of those who practice it in the country, it is definitely not so in the tiny township of Moreh on the Manipur-Burma border. Almost all of Moreh's 6,000 people make a living out of the illegal transaction of goods across the border, secure in the knowledge that the state Government will never come down heavily on them as that will have an upsetting effect on the state's economy. On this score, tension is mounting between Manipur authorities and the Border Security Force (BSF) and last fortnight a BSF spokesman said in Imphal: "It is impossible the way the state Government chooses to shut its eye to the menace and refuses to cooperate with us in any way."

The state Government perhaps has reasons for its indifference. Whatever the law, the activities in this jaundice and malaria-infested town provide almost the entire state with the daily necessities of life which normally can be had only at a steep price. Even while BSF officers complain, lunch for any of their men at Moreh will inevitably consist of smuggled Burmese rice which sells for Rs 2 a kg, far cheaper and of better quality than the best variety of Manipuri rice. Burmese salt can also be had for Rs 4 a kg against Rs 7 for the Manipuri variety.

Lucrative Occupation: Every day buses and trucks bring hundreds of people from Imphal to Moreh to collect the contraband, sold openly in the market-place, which they deliver to every corner of the state. It is a lucrative occupation for thousands and with chronic unemployment problem on its hands the state Government is understandably wary of denying them their bread and butter. There is also the fear that with smuggling stamped out these people may well choose to resort to other and more dangerous means of livelihood, for instance, working with the underground.

Smuggling at Moreh has a totally cosmopolitan character. In other parts of the state the agitation against *mayanges* (foreigners) continues, but at Moreh there is perfect coexistence displayed by people from all parts of the country engaged in the common pursuit of money. Indeed, the principal operators are not Manipuris but south Indians and Bengalis whose families had crossed over from Burma during the Japanese occupation in World War II and took up smuggling after the war as the only means of remaining in touch with their original country.

The practice gets more lucrative every day with generous finances offered by Marwari traders. What further helps the smugglers is the Indo-Burma agreement which allows tribals free access to four hundred yards on either side of the border. The operators grabbed this opportunity and quite a few married tribal girls so that their wives could act as messengers and couriers. Today almost every second hut in the dingy tenement-areas of Moreh houses a mixed family, dark-skinned south Indians living happily with one or more tribal wives.

A soldier at the Indo-Burma border at Moreh: an impossible job

Child's Play: With what care the entire operation is planned is evident from the location of the houses on the Indian side. They are right on the border and it is child's play for the women to enter Burma when the sentry is looking the other way and return from the other side at pre-arranged points. Once the goods have been brought on Indian territory the BSF cannot do a thing as the responsibility then passes to the Customs and police authorities who generally take things very easy. Even so, some seizures are made. Last year the BSF got hold of goods worth around Rs 12 lakh which they themselves admit is chicken-feed compared to the total volume of transactions.

Apart from foodstuff, in great demand is a type of silk which is a favourite with the younger generation of Manipuri women, and jeans and perfumes made in Bangkok. Also smuggled in from Burma is the very expensive fragrant agar wood (which finds its way to mosques in the Middle East after passing through Bombay, the estimated price being Rs 75,000 a tonne) and rubies and sapphires which are lapped up by jewellers all over the country.

From India go mostly medicines, spares of vintage cars like Chevrolet which are strictly forbidden in Burma—the spares are supposed to come from dealers in the Goabagan area of north Calcutta—tea and cycles. Indeed while the cycle is the most popular transport in all Manipuri towns, at Moreh nobody rides it even though there are over 20 shops dealing in it—the vehicle is meant solely for Burma.

Those who talk of a parallel economy in the country would find in Moreh a flourishing banking system. The official exchange rate does not exist at Moreh where the rates change almost daily depending on the volume of trade. Every morning the current rate is passed on to operators in the bazar, the day's rate being fixed by an intricate system of calculation between the two sides which is comprehensible to only those at home in the system.

The most wonderful aspect is the openness with which the transactions are conducted: almost as if the law has gone on holiday in this part of the country. As Sundaram, a tall and lanky Tamil said: "Why should the Government bother us when we are not disturbing the peace like many others." He had voiced the very sentiments prevailing in the secretariat at distant Imphal.

—SUMANTA SEN

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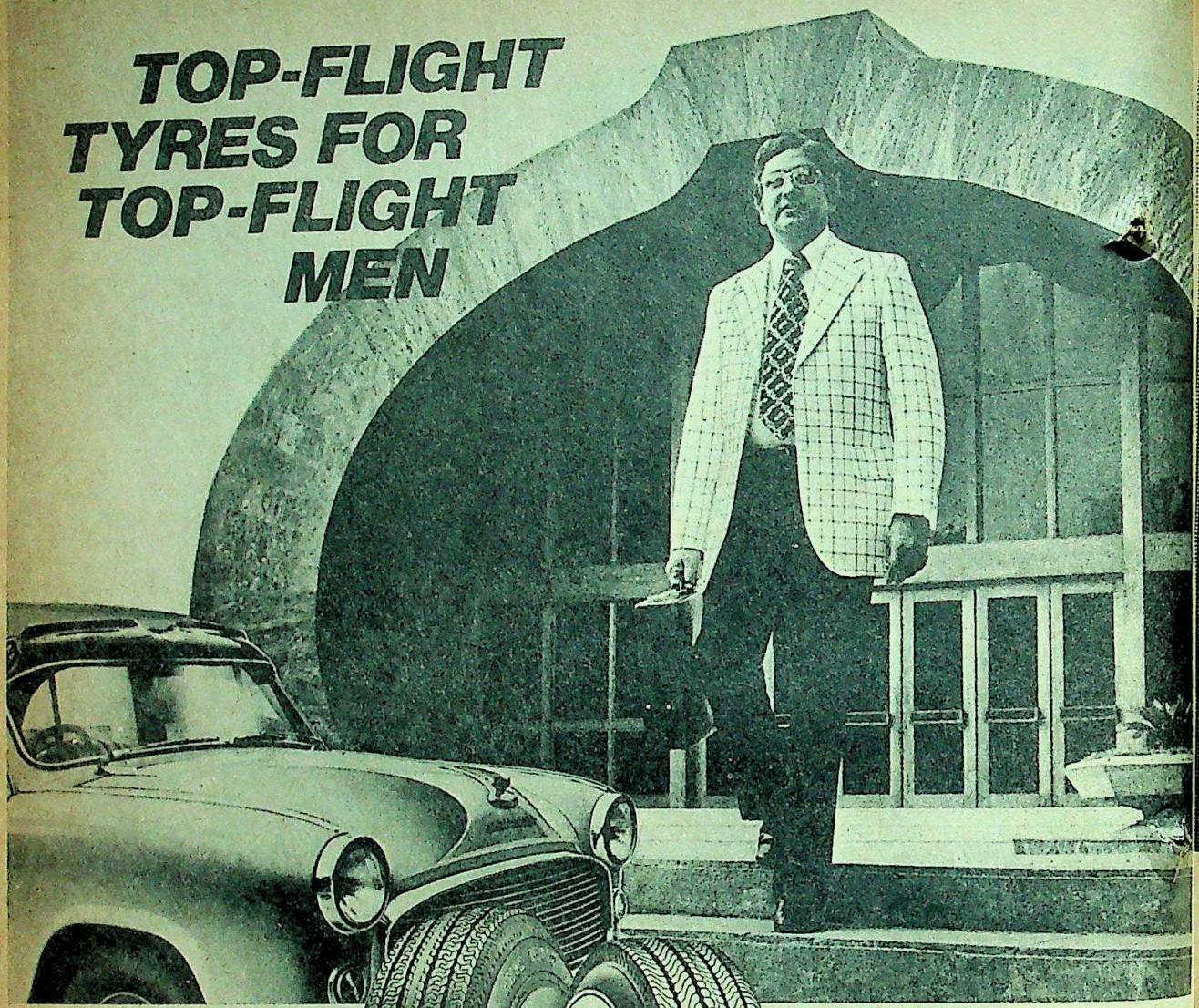

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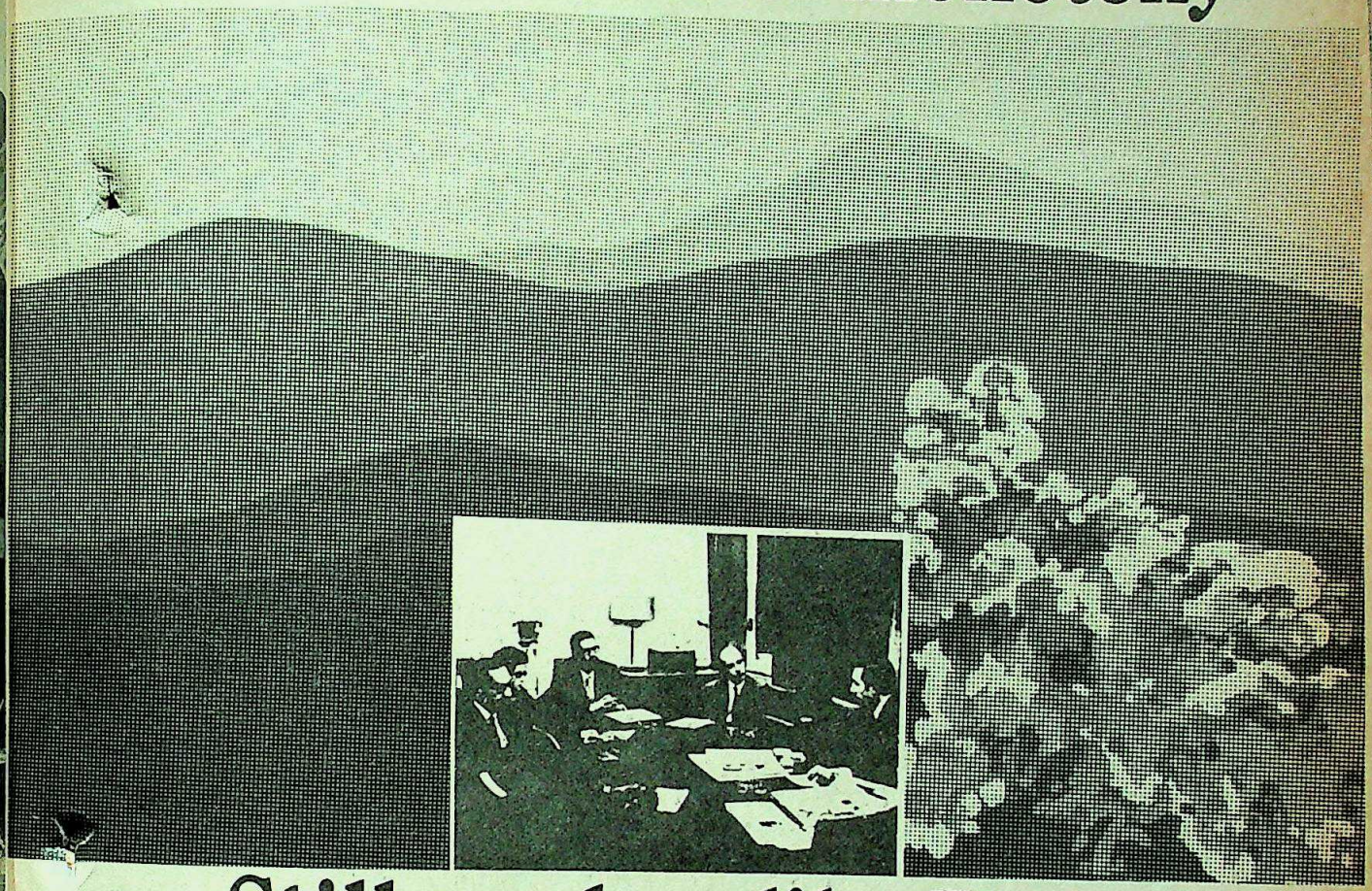
Great moments of monotony



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FESTIVAL OF INDIA

Selling A Civilisation

TO A TRUMPET fanfare from the President's Bodyguard, especially flown in from India, the twinkle of Ravi Shankar's nimble fingers on the sitar, the mellifluous voice of M.S. Subbalakshmi and under the benevolent gaze of Prince Charles, Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi and Margaret Thatcher, the Festival of India was officially inaugurated last fortnight. Outside, the sudden passage of an Indian summer after a spell of cold weather, had encouraged a few hundred demonstrators.

From slogans like "Thatcher—Stop Virginity Tests" to "Kashmir Liberation Front", all manner of public protests were being voiced. Earlier, there were rumours that Jagjit Singh Chauhan's Khalistan group had planned a major demonstration. "*Chamchas*", shouted other protestors, as elegant and well-heeled members of the audience entered the Royal Festival Hall, passing through two rows of policemen patrolling the entrance.

Inside, the atmosphere belonged to another world altogether. Celebrities from the Indian world of art, craft, literature, politics and trade congregated to listen to Subbalakshmi, her diamonds glittering, her hands beating time gracefully. A motley Indo-British crowd, the audience may not have been able to understand much of her music, but were only too eager to applaud. Ravi Shankar's Second Concerto for the sitar and orchestra, with Zubin Mehta conducting the London Philharmonic, was in itself a remarkable partnership but the music it produced was an incompatible confusion of western melody and poor harmony on drums. Occasionally, its discordant notes were reminiscent of a Red Fort wedding band or a Bombay film studio orchestra. But the packed hall lappped it up eagerly.

Rare Gesture: Earlier in the day, Mrs Gandhi and her entourage were received at London's Heathrow Airport by the British prime minister, in a rare gesture that cut across limitations of protocol. But a more serious departure in British—or was it Indian?—protocol at the airport was the presence of the portly London-based industrialist Swaraj Paul at the end of the official red carpet upon which already stood Mrs Thatcher, Indian High Commissioner Syed Muhammed with his wife and Pupul Jayakar.

Paul's presence irked some members of the Indian community in Britain and many British who noted the conspicuous absence of Sir Michael Walker—chairman of the British Festival Committee—and former high commissioner in New Delhi. Snapped an irate Paul when the criticisms were pointed out: "Where were these people who now criticise me in 1978, when Mrs Gandhi needed friends?"

Although the British media exercised itself in taking note of the Indian prime minister's arrival, reaction to the Festival was mixed, and some sarcasm evident in the tone of the major dailies heralding her achievements. In general, the popular press blanked out the whole affair, but *The Times* dwelt upon the sentimental relationship between the two countries in an editorial on the Festival. *The Guardian* called it the "biggest nation-to-nation festival in history" adding that it "should be seen as a celebration of the continuing links with a country from which one million of our citizens have sprung and a recognition of the changing contours of British culture".

Creditable: Reactions from the man-on-the-street to 2,000 years of Indian culture on display were hard to gauge in the first few days—many had not even heard of the event—but if the random remark of an Englishwoman outside the "See India" promotion at Selfridge's who said that "it makes me want to go to India and learn more about it" was any indication, then the Indian Tourism Ministry which organised the show hasn't done too badly.

The Selfridge's show which is to run for six months, before travelling to other British towns, is built around some tacky treasures from the Maharaja of Jaipur's collections. The limelight is shared by the Handlooms & Handicrafts Export Corporation (HHEC) Sona Boutique, Shahnaz Husain's herbal products and well-stocked, if boxy, gifts section (made up of marble boxes, bamboo boxes, brass boxes, mother-of-pearl inlay boxes.

There are some glaring omissions such as of utility items and the special silks and prints for the textile department failed to arrive for the opening. Although 12 show-windows have been well-dressed with Indian designer Benoy Sarkar flown in to help, the 1,800 sq ft of sales space (and £ 120,000, or Rs 21.6 crore, required for the HHEC to recover costs) is poor on merchandise. HHEC Managing Director Diljeet Arora is optimistic about "selling at least 60 per cent of the goods on display" but concedes that there was no determined effort at market research. For this reason, perhaps, the HHEC had to enlist the help of Indian entrepreneurs to supply goods such a Nalini saris, Zodiac shirts and Vaishali brassware.

Splendid Show: Mrs Gandhi's packed schedule on the six-day official visit included the opening of a permanent Nehru exhibition at Ambika House, set up by Paul and described as "a memorial to Nehru which will illustrate the meaning of his life for future generations in this country". Also a visit with Mrs Thatcher to the splendid Hayward Gallery show entitled "In the Image of Man" containing the finest collection of 500 works of Indian art and sculpture ever seen. The gallery, a vast concrete structure, contains fine pieces of Indian sculpture sensibly seated on sand, thereby giving an earthy touch to the stone images of Hindu gods and goddesses and evoking a sense of great beauty and peace.

With only the opening events of the Festival taking off, money is still pouring into the official Festival fund which is now worth over £500,000 (Rs 90 lakh). This will help support Indian performing artistes, some 200 in number, who will be visiting Britain through the year. "Their care has been our special concern", says Lady Thompson, wife of the British high commissioner in New Delhi who is on the British committee and was instrumental, together with her husband, in originating the Festival.

Lady Thompson admits that the Festival has had a shaky time financially, but luckily for both sides, sponsorship by private companies has come in handy. Grindlays Bank, for example, underwrote expenses for the inaugural concert at a cost of over Rs 12.5 lakh. Barclays Bank has been another major backer, and among London-based Indian companies that have contributed over £5,000 (Rs 90,000) are Paul's Caparo Group, the Chandaria Foundation, the Chellaram Foundation, Bajaj Auto Ltd, the Hinduja Foundation and others. Backing from Indian companies includes subsidies by Hindustan Lever, the Tata

A group of children in national costume at Heathrow to welcome Mrs Gandhi (above) who is (below) received by the British Premier Margaret Thatcher.

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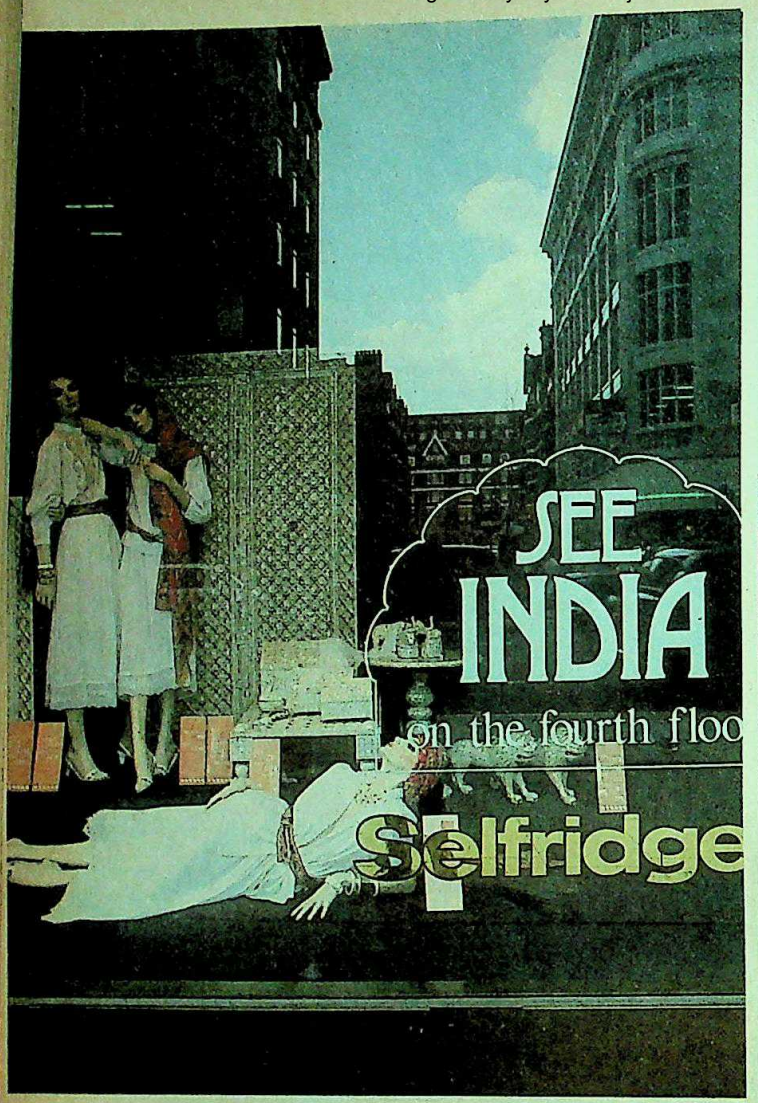

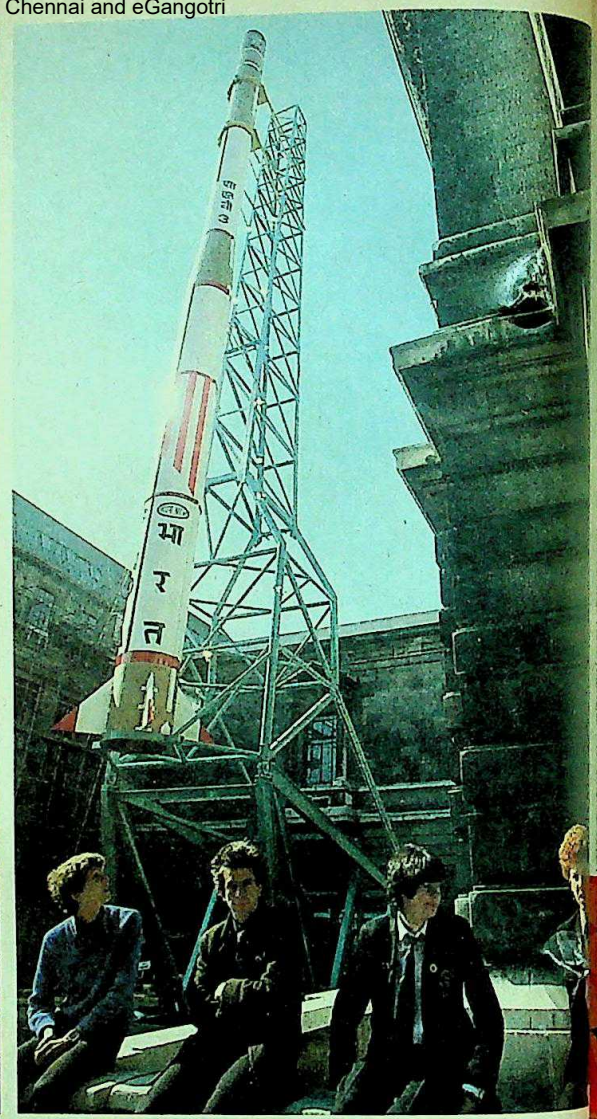

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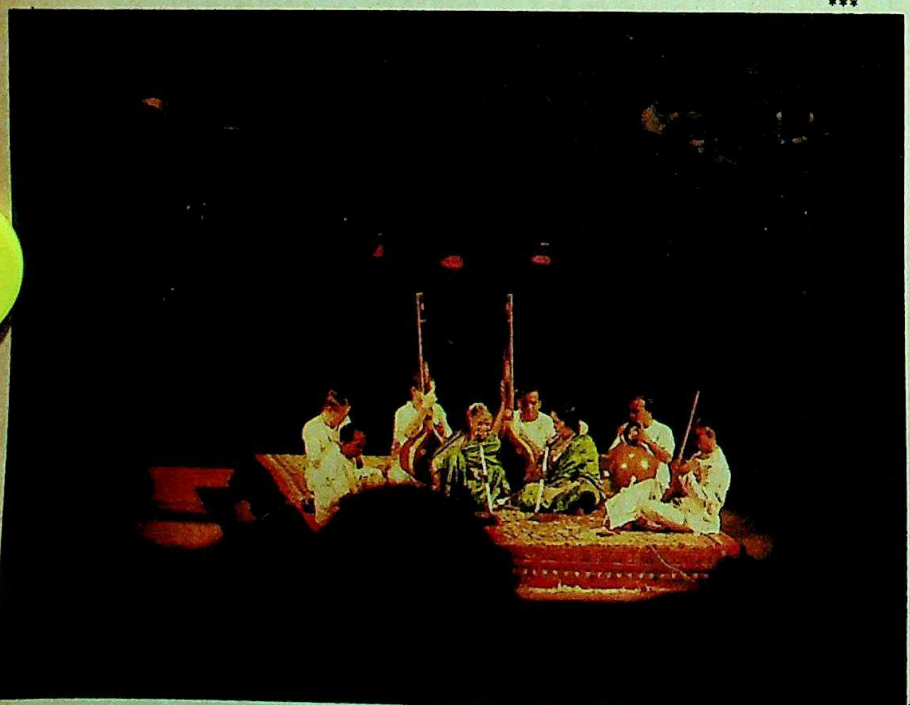

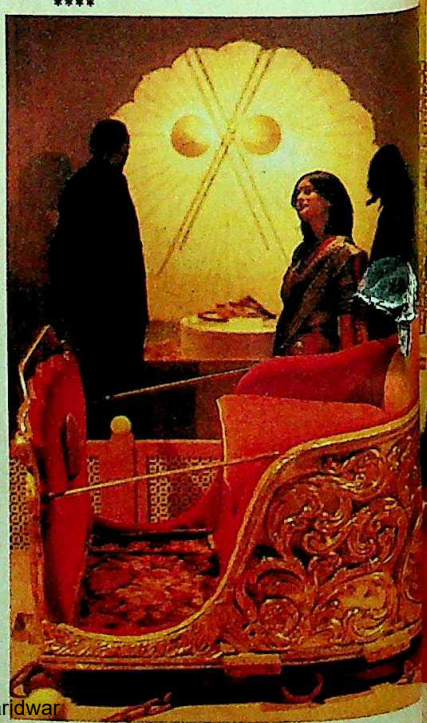

* View of Selfridge show-win selling In

*** Singer M.S. Sul scintillat at inaugu concert

An Indian

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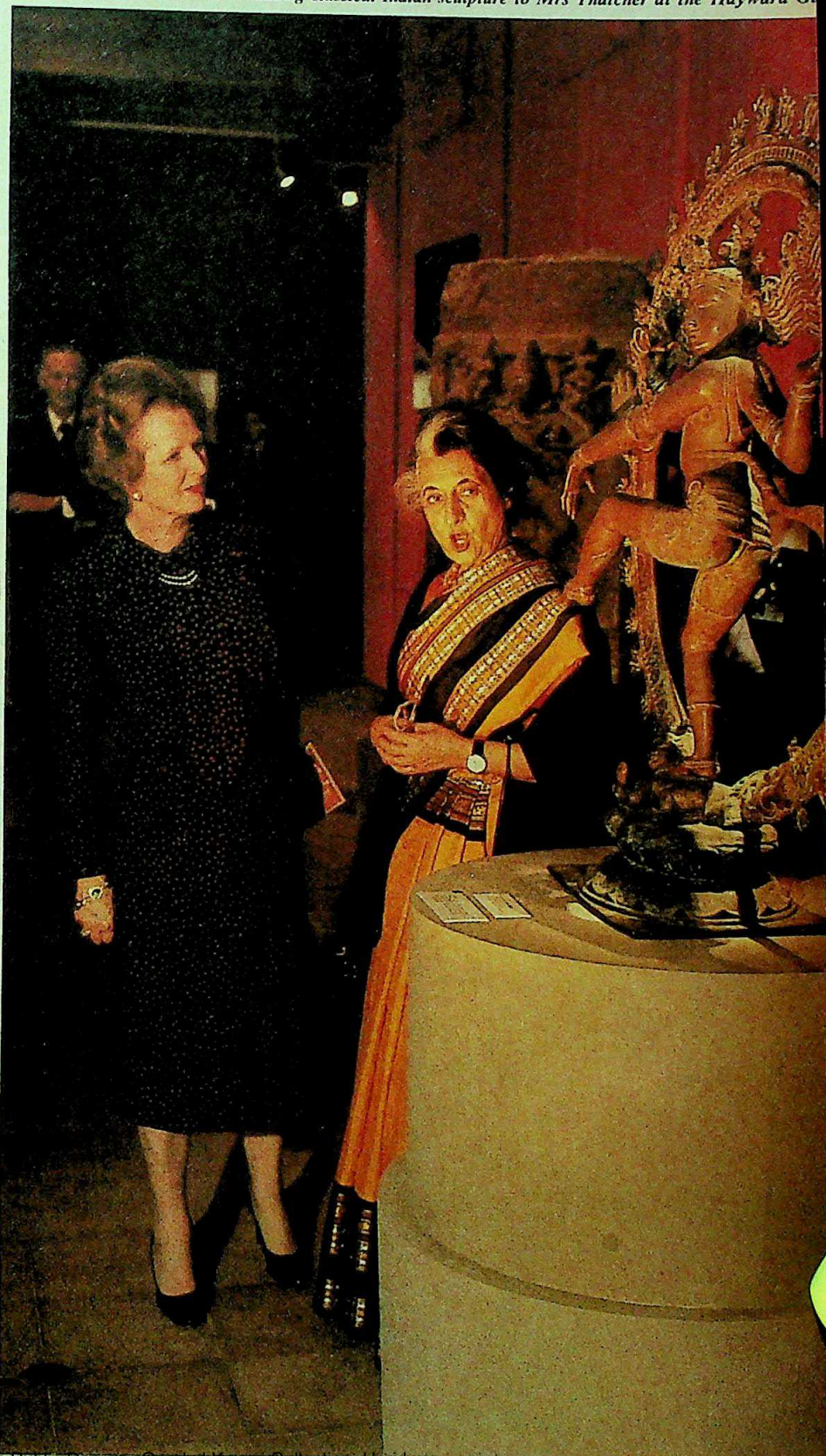
* *View of Selfridge's show-window selling India*

** *Model of SLV-3 rocket interests British schoolboys*

*** *Singer M.S. Subbalakshmi scintillates at inaugural concert*

**** *Visitors view a royal treasure from India*

An animated Mrs Gandhi introducing classical Indian sculpture to Mrs Thatcher at the Hayward Ga



An Indian guide promoting handicrafts at Selfridge's

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Local Indians release pigeons in symbolic prote

An Indian guide displays a traditional Indian jhoola

An inside view of Selfridge's promotion

Interior of the Science Museum displ

Indian children perform a masked dance beside the river Tha

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DIA TODAY

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Mahindra & Mahindra and Indian Oxygen Ltd. Pupul Jayakar, chairman of the Indian committee organising the Festival, says that Indian expenses on the show will touch Rs 1 crore with roughly two-thirds of the funding by the Government and the rest from private sources.

Tremendous Skills: "I've always felt that if India has to project itself, it should project big or not all," said Jayakar before her departure for London. "And that," she added, "is not always a question of money. It is a question of showing the tremendous skills still available in this country, and also the tremendous sense of quality that is available." Says David Thompson, brother of Sir John Thompson, chairman of Lazard and Company, merchant bankers, who sponsored the Hayward Gallery exhibition: "We have developed a growing interest in India and it was natural that we were asked to contribute." His company was responsible for negotiating the massive British Government loan to finance the Paradeep mining project.

Local Indians meanwhile have continued to provide their own background tableau of intrigues, quarrels and personality clashes. "We were only asked to collect money, we were never asked for any suggestions," says Tarsen Singh Toor, a Southall businessman. Nevertheless, Toor and his fellow members of the Indian Overseas Congress have managed to raise upwards of £10,000 (Rs 1.8 lakh) from private donors for the Festival fund. Criticism of the Festival also continues to come from other sources. Said one lecturer in Indian languages from London University, "What's the point in having a festival celebrating Indian culture when the British Government is determined to squeeze out the teaching of Indian and other languages at universities?"

Naseem Khan's group of Indian artistes in UK who in company with Toor and other local Indians feel that they have not been asked to make a useful contribution to the Festival Hall, made a lonely stand on the banks of the Thames outside the Festival Hall. One hundred doves (or perhaps pigeons) were released each standing for a working Indian artiste in Britain.

Rising Discontent: Grouses in London are matched by rumblings of discontent in New Delhi. Last fortnight, revolt broke out in the ranks of some top-ranking Indian performing artistes who are slated to travel to London for concerts of music and dance when they discovered that, while the Indian Government expected them to perform free of charge, singer Subbalakshmi, sitar maestro Ravi Shankar and conductor Zubin Mehta had all been handsomely paid by the British Government for the inaugural show. The performers include dancers Birju Maharaj and Sanjukta Panigrahi, singer Aminuddin Khan Dagar and sarod maestro Amjad Ali Khan.

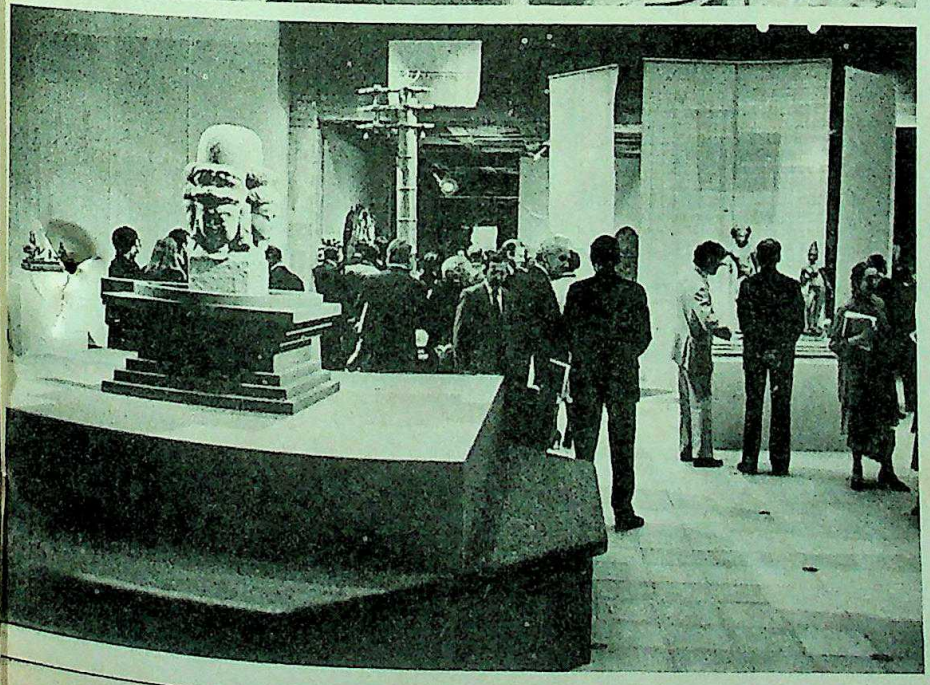
In a protesting letter to the ICCR Amjad Ali Khan pointed that: "In view of this discrimination I would like to state that I no longer wish to participate in the Festival. I feel that the attitude of the Indian Government lacks a certain grace. If it was not possible for the British Government to pay all the Indian artistes, the Indian Government should have considered themselves responsible to match this commitment towards their own artistes."

While some of the organisers shrug off such complaints with a you-can't-please-all mumble, the Festival of India's chief patron, Indira Gandhi, obviously enjoyed her trip very much. Relaxed and exuding confidence during her private and public perambulations in London, she exulted at her press conference: "I have always regarded London as a friend. I am delighted to be here."

Less exultant may be the reaction of the wary Briton who, after eight months of Indian art and culture in his country, may turn around to his Indian neighbour and ask: "All this is superb, why don't you go back to it?"

—BONNY MUKHERJEE in London with SUNIL SETHI in New Delhi

The gifts section at Selfridge's and, below, visitors at the Hayward Gallery exhibition on Indian art



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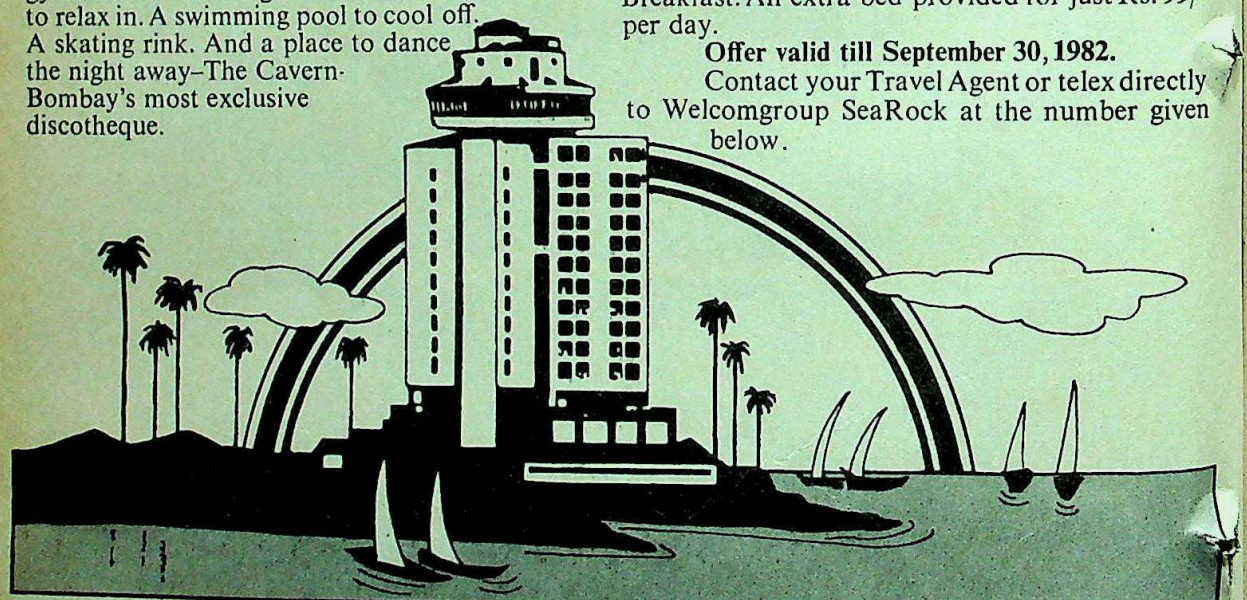

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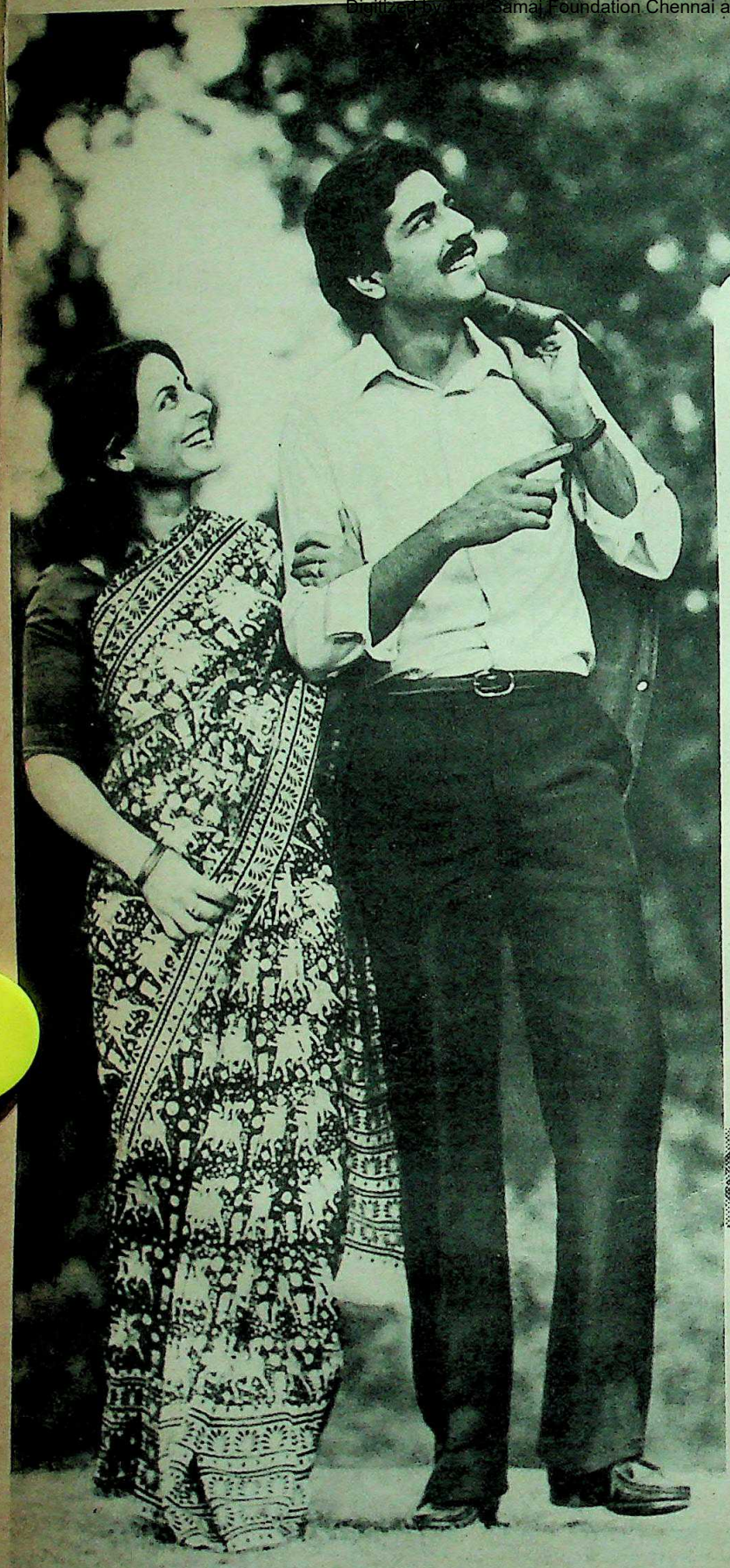

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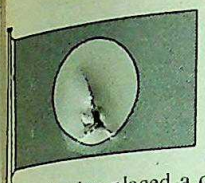
BANGLADESH

Coup De Brass



IT WAS swift, smooth and surgical. It was also painfully inevitable. Last week, barely four months after a general election placed a civilian government in Bangladesh's bloody saddle, the country woke up to another pre-dawn coup staged by the chief of army staff, Lieutenant-General H.M. Ershad, 52. It was the seventh coup since the traumatic birth of Bangladesh exactly a decade ago and left the country once again firmly in the grip of uncertainty.

Nobody, least of all the toppled civilian government of President Abdus Sattar, 76, could have been surprised by the coup. For weeks, the well-paved streets of Dacca have been buzzing with rumours of the impending coup. In fact, a military take-over has been in the air ever since the assassination of former president Ziaur Rahman last May (INDIA TODAY, June 16-30, 1981) when Sattar, a former justice, took over as acting president. Even before the Presidential election of last November, which Sattar's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) won overwhelmingly, Ershad sounded the first warning singal when he demanded the right of the armed forces to have an effective say in the running of the Government and the country's future destiny. Sattar's stubborn refusal to allow that, both before and after the Presidential election, effectively sealed his political fate.

Indecisive Ruler: In fact, the coup was largely of Sattar's own making. Though bestowed with enormous powers as President and head of the ruling party, Sattar proved a weak and indecisive ruler, allowing the BNP to steadily disintegrate into factional dogfights, while the country was experiencing a dangerous drift with the Government eventually reduced to the role of a helpless spectator. In that situation, a military takeover was only a question of timing. Ershad himself left the country in no doubt that the army was poised to move in.

In November, just before the elections, he summoned a meeting of local newspaper editors and outlined administrative measures to "define clearly the role of the military in our society". The unspoken message was that at that stage, the army was seeking a major role in the Government through constitutional means. The pressure increased when Sattar produced a sop to the military in the form of the National Security Council (NSC) announced on New Year's Day, viewed as a major victory for Ershad.

Even so, the ambitious chief of staff had no hesitation in launching a blistering attack on the NSC which was both an indication of his growing impatience and the popular backing he was receiving from the Awami League founded by the country's first president, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, himself the tragic victim of an assassin's bullet in 1975, and the leftist parties. Ershad's escalating power was further buttressed in February when Sattar was forced to cave in to military pressure and dismiss his cabinet and reconstitute the Government.

Military Backing: Ershad himself l no opportunity in reminding Sattar that appointment as the country's head af Zia's assassination was largely because military backing. In fact, Sattar's clum efforts to side-step the growing clamo for military involvement in the Governme was partly fuelled by pressure from t Prime Minister Shah Aziz-ur-Rahman, w was firmly against military interferenc Only weeks ago he had issued a stro statement claiming that democracy ha "found firm roots in the soil of Bangladesh and inisisting that there was perfect unde standing between the Government and t military. That, however, was mere whistlin in the dark since the coup of March 24 ha already been set in motion, and in the mo obvious manner.

The key roles in the pre-coup drama wer played by two generals—Major-Genera Nuruddin, chief of the general staff, an Major-General Mohabbat Jan Chouddary director-general of military intelligence. I February, the two men flew to Indonesia fo a two-week stay during which they con ducted an exhaustive study of the adminis trative system and functioning of a govern ment that has a powerful military element. It was an open secret that the two men had been sent with instructions to prepare a blueprint of a military take-over in Dacca and the eventual formation of a government based on the Indonesian system. The two men returned to Bangladesh three weeks ago and the final moves were set in motion.

Over the next two weeks, the coup leaders arranged a series of confidential meetings with top bureaucrats and political leaders of various parties, including the BNP dissidents, to discuss a peaceful transfer of power. Two days before the coup, according to intelligence sources, Sattar was informed that the change-over was to take place. Simultaneously, hand-picked leaders of the Awami League, a potential threat to any future government, were called in and informed of the plot and their assurance that they would steer clear was obtained. The seven Awami League leaders did not include Sheikh Hasina Wajed, Mujibur Rahman's daughter who is suspected of being strongly pro-Indian.

Anti-climax: With Sattar an unwilling

Sheikh Mujib, Ziaur Rahman and Sattar: vicious circle

Ershad: question of timing

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helpless accomplice, the coup which took ce on the eve of Bangladesh's National y, was an anti-climax and the overthrown esident himself went on the air in a brief e-prepared broadcast after the take-over to nounce the birth of "a new era in the tory of the country". Potential trouble-akers were arrested and included former ance minister, Saifur Rahman, minister of ate for commerce, Tanvir Ahmed Siddiqui, inister of state for manpower, Atauddin han, the pro-Moscow Ekota (unity) engupta, and Colonel Nuruzamman, for-er chairman of the Freedom Fighters' rganisation. Wajed was placed under ouse arrest. Reports of the number of rests ranged from 100 to 500 but the ansition of power was peaceful, parti-cularly in Dacca.

Ershad himself is an enigmatic figure and it is difficult to predict the path he will take the country on. He will obviously be ardently wooed by the three countries that have a vital stake in the area—Pakistan, China and the US with the last-named being probably a front-runner in terms of aid, both military and economic. According to reports from Dacca, the five martial law administrators appointed by Ershad to run the five administrative zones he has parcelled the country into are pro-American and, like in the aftermath of Mujib's assassination, there are bound to be awkward questions raised regarding US involvement or knowledge of last week's coup.

In any event, with the army firmly in the driving seat and an economic crisis looming ahead (*see box*), Bangladesh is certain to be hypervulnerable to external exploitation in the coming months. Ershad's promise of any early return to civilian rule rings as hollow as the similar promises made by his neighbour General Zia in Pakistan. For the moment, all indications seem to point to the present Pakistan situation repeating itself in Bangladesh with a military crackdown on political opponents and a massive spring-cleaning within the Government machinery to consolidate the military stranglehold—till another ambitious general comes along.

—DILIP BOBB and ASOKA RAINA

FAMINE

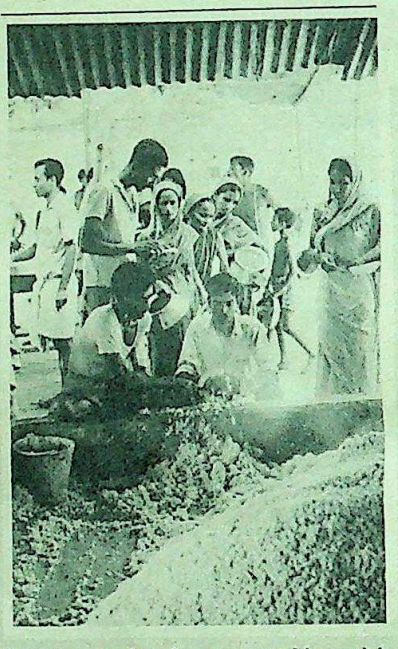
Double Trouble

THE GREATEST test for Lieutenant-General H.M. Ershad's new Government is the spectre of famine that once again looms over Bangladesh. The official estimate of food deficit is 2.26 million tonnes and experts fear this may reach 3 million tonnes—the record deficit of 1974 when 20,000 people starved to death. The food problem has always taken the measure of governments in Bangladesh, and Ershad will have his hands as full as Abdus Sattar did, especially at a time when there is little foreign exchange with which to purchase grain.

Last month, Alexander Storrer, chief of the World Bank in Bangladesh, told foreign correspondents that the nation's stock of foodgrains will come down to 6 lakh tonnes by June-July but it will need at least 1.1 million tonnes around that time to meet the overall shortfall. His bank has already sent urgent requests to donor countries but the response is uncertain. "I do not have the foggiest idea as to from where the foodgrains will come," he said.

Meanwhile the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has flatly refused to advance any more special drawing rights (SDRs) to solve the foreign exchange problem. In a 1980 agreement the IMF granted Bangladesh SDRs of over US $ 1 billion (Rs 8,100 crore) to be drawn over a three-year period. However, the SDR disbursement was suddenly stopped six months ago after Bangladesh had received only US $ 200 million (Rs 180 crore).

Conditions: IMF disapproves of Bangladesh's economic policies and refuses to resume the disbursement unless the Government implements several suggestions. The IMF wants nationalised industries, which the Government presently supports with heavy subsidies, to be returned to the private sector whenever economically feasible. Also proposed are stringent measures to thwart strikes and lock-outs, a price increase for various products to reduce the extent of subsidies and transfer of fertiliser procurement and distribution to the private sector.



Queuing up for rice: approaching crisis

The political impact of the 1974 famine on the Awami League regime is well remembered and with that lesson in mind the Sattar government was desperately attempting to stave off the crisis through external procurement on a priority basis. The country has already received 5,49,363 tonnes of foodgrain and another 4,67,000 tonnes are in the pipeline.

Coping Measures: The state trading corporation has halted the export of one lakh tonnes of rice to Guinea which was negotiated by the late president Ziaur Rahman. The Government is arranging mobilisation of additional stocks in the critical distressed areas and inaccessible parts of the country. Modified rationing has been ordered to supply more food to the worst affected pockets. Prices of foodgrains have already started rising in the open market.

This year's shortfall was mainly caused by unfavourable weather coupled with widespread pest damage and insufficient supply of fertiliser. The winter crop which accounts for 63 per cent of the total annual food production was washed away resulting in 50 per cent less yield in most areas. After deducting 10 per cent for seed and wastage, the food production during the current financial year 1981-82 has been calculated at 127.35 lakh tonnes as against the required 150 lakh tonnes.

While admitting the situation is perilous former food minister Abdul Momen Khan—who although credited with averting the famine predicted for 1979 was dropped in Sattar's reshuffle—told INDIA TODAY: "There is no cause to worry because the situation is still better than what it was in 1979. We have a better stock position at the moment."

The coming months will pose a crucial challenge to the martial law administration. The national hunger makes Ershad's foundling government all the more vulnerable to pressures from outside, and a philanthropic nation might seek to acquire influence with gifts of grain. As stomachs rumble louder and louder, the army will have to be on its guard.

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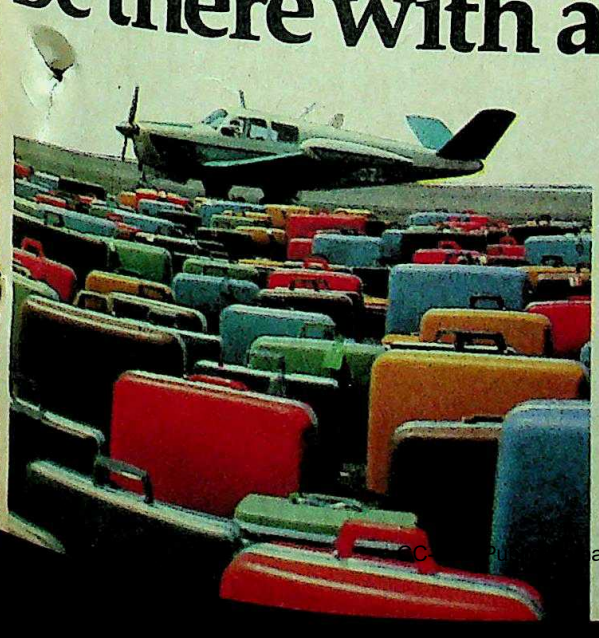

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SHUFFLING THE PACK

WITH Britain's winter of acute discontent almost over, the change in weather is also expected to usher in major changes in Mrs Thatcher's besieged Cabinet. With Britain's growing ills most visibly evident in escalating violence and unemployment, the most obvious changes are likely to be in the key portfolios of home and the exchequer. Home Secretary William Whitelaw, responsible for law and order, is expected to be replaced by Francis Pym, leader of the House of Commons or Sir Geoffrey Howe, current chancellor of the exchequer. Howe himself is expected to be replaced by Nigel Lawson, the energy secretary. The changes, however, have a two-fold purpose since they will take place just before the run-up to the next general elections in May 1984.

Thatcher: face-lift

(From left) Whitelaw, Pym and Howe: out of the firing line

POISED FOR THE PUNCH

FEARS that Israel may be planning a strike against PLO bases in south Lebanon have grown alarmingly in recent weeks. Israel's Ambassador to Washington Moshe Arens has been quoted as having predicted that Israeli action against Palestine is "only a matter of time", while the Palestinians themselves claim that Israel has postponed an attack till now only because of unfavourable weather conditions. Most intelligence reports predict that the attack is inevitable and will be launched in the spring and may also have Syrian missile bases as one of its targets. Israel's Defence Minister Ariel Sharon, has stated that Israel will not attack unless there is "provocation"; but that could mean just about anything, including the supply of Soviet weapons to PLO forces.

SHADOW BOXING

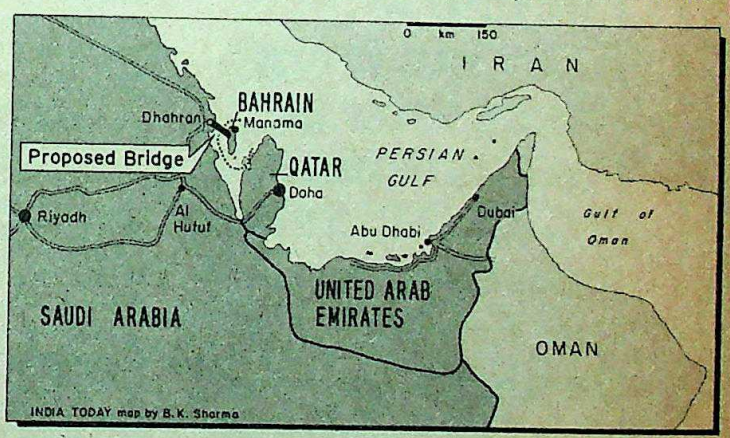
THE acrimonious Afghanistan question may finally be resolved in the unlikeliest of ways and by two groups that are virtually unkown. The first is the Afghan Solidarity Group comprised of former bureaucrats, diplomats, technocrats and politicians who served under King Zahir Shah and are currently in exile. The group is led by Mohammad Yusuf, prime minister during Zahir Shah's time. The group has been in touch with another shadowy group inside Afghanistan called the Work Group made up of civil servants, army officials and senior civil servants disillusioned with the Karmal Government. The common denominator between the two groups is their realistic attitude that any negotiations over the Afghanistan question cannot exclude the Soviets.

NO BOMBS IN THE BALTIC

RUNNING parallel with efforts to keep the Indian Ocean a zone of peace is a growing Scandinavian chorus to keep the Baltic Sea a nuclear-free area. The idea of a Nordic nuclear-free zone was originally launched by Finland some 20 years ago but faded out till the Norwegian Government revived it last year in slightly diluted form. So far, Denmark and Norway have pursued a policy of not having nuclear weapons on their territory in "times of peace", while Finland and Sweden have no nuclear weapons at all. Now Sweden has started an unofficial campaign to keep the Baltic nuclear-free. Significantly, the campaign started after a Soviet submarine, which the Swedes claim carried nuclear weapons, ran aground in Swedish territory.

BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING

SAUDI Arabia has always portrayed itself as the Big Brother of all the Gulf states and its massive oil revenues and moderate policies have helped buttress that image. Lately, however, it has started shying away from the more radical states like Iran and Iraq and has turned a benevolent eye on the Gulf's small fry with the intention of gathering them under its protective wing. Bahrain, the most permissive of the Gulf states, has gradually been inching closer to Saudi Arabia and recently signed a joint security pact with that country. The Saudis are also paying for a 25 km bridge linking the two countries. Qatar, Bahrain's neighbour, heartily approved the Saudi-Bahrain pact and is already in the Saudi fold.



There are also signs that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with active encouragement from Saudi Arabia, have resolved their internal differences and are more unified than ever before. In that context, Saudi Arabia seems to be emerging rapidly as another superpower.

BATTLE FOR POWER

CANADA and France are locked in a no-holds-barred battle to sell nuclear reactors to the Gulf states. With France acting tough on the rebuilding of the Iraq nuclear reactor destroyed by the Israelis, feelers have been sent out to the Canadians for possible help. Meanwhile, French and Canadian officials are shuttling between two other Gulf countries contemplating nuclear plants—Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Both the Gulf countries are studying proposals to obtain uranium to run the plants from Niger.

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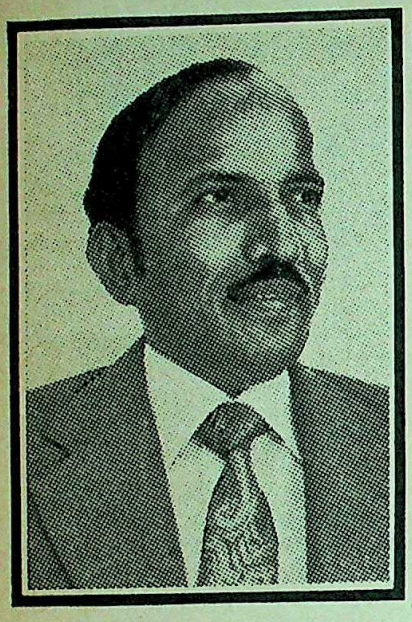

Chemicals And Fibres of India Limited — Extracts from the speech of the Chairman, Mr.A.L.Mudaliar, delivered at the Annual General Meeting held in Bombay on 3rd March, '82.

IMPROVED PERFORMANCE

It is a matter of satisfaction for me to be able to draw your attention to **the record that has been established by your Company's sales of 7115 tonnes of fibre during 1980-81**, the previous best being 6538 tonnes achieved in 1973. This resulted in a profit before tax of Rs. 195 lacs this year against Rs. 55 lacs last year — an impressive recovery made possible by your Company's ability to respond swiftly to opportunities as they occurred.

Imports became less attractive during the year due to the hardening of the dollar and the continuation of high international prices. Additionally a temporary market imbalance was created by dislocation in the manufacture of some other manufacturers of polyester staple fibre. Your Company by virtue of its expanded capacity was able to utilise the opportunity offered by these circumstances. **Other factors which also contributed to the improved results were the significant economies and efficiency improvements achieved in your Company's operations during the year.**

Improvements in design incorporated during the recent expansion, process development, rationalisation of the product mix and reduced downtime have all helped in achieving production in the second half of the year equivalent to a 9,000 tonnes per annum rate. **In the last quarter the plant in fact, reached its rated design capacity of 10,000 tonnes per annum.** In the field of energy conservation, furnace oil consumption per tonne of fibre produced has been brought down by 35%, while electricity consumption has been reduced by 33%. Raw material efficiency which was a little low in the first half of the year due to low occupacity, improved sharply in the second half. These achievements were made possible by the enthusiastic response from all levels of staff and workers to the call for economy and better productivity

STAGNANT MARKET

However welcome the improvement profits, it must be remembered that post-tax return on shareholders' fun while going up to 4.8% from last year figure of 2.8% is still at an unsatisfac level — a direct consequence of a stagnant market with demand for polyester staple fibre remaining at a level of 32,000 tonnes reached four years ago. The process of expansion capacities of existing manufacturers meanwhile, continues towards an all-India capacity of 90,000 tonnes by t mid '80s. With demand static, it is natural to ask where the production from this expanded capacity at this h cost will be placed! Or **are we setting the scene for yet another situation o large unutilised capacity?** Unless ste are taken to remove the restraints or demand, I am afraid any other progn seems unlikely.

IMPACT OF BUDGET

I have spoken at length in the past o the reasons behind the stagnation o polyester staple fibre demand in our country. A primary factor has been punitive level of excise duties on thi item. The multi-point imposts have resulted in a "cascade effect" as not by the Report of Shri L K Jha's Indir Taxation Enquiry Committee. Correc of this overblown system of fiscal incidence has been long overdue an indeed, the Government's Textile Po Statement of March 1981 had prom a review of the levies on man-made fibres and yarns. **It is good to note t the Finance Minister, who as the Commerce Minister had presented t Textile Policy Statement, has follow up this promise in the recent Budg with a rationalisation of the excise incidence on different blends of polyester.** This would give protecti consumers from the large supply misleadingly stamped blended by discouraging the production of containing polyester in too small a proportion to enable the durability easy-care properties of this fibre to achieved. The Finance Minister has

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reduced the duty on polyester blended yarn providing for the consumer the possibility of a relief in the prices of polyester blended fabrics. On polyester blended shirting selling for Rs 25 per metre for example, the reduction could be Rs 2.00 per metre on a rough calculation. **The Finance Minister has to be congratulated on the action he has taken and it is up to the textile mills to pass on the benefits to the ultimate consumers of blended fabrics thereby stimulating demand growth.** However, I would like to think that at the next phase the Finance Minister would see it fit to adjust the high rates of basic duties on polyester staple fibre in order to eliminate the cascading effect and enable the market for polyester staple fibre to expand at a brisk pace.

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here remain certain aspects of thinking which tend to distort evaluation of the le that polyester should play in the tal scheme of things. Firstly, it has en customary in some quarters to talk polyester as a competitor to cotton. his attitude does not represent the rrect situation. Polyester staple fibre's nction was simply to provide cotton th some of the properties which the tural fibre lacks. The position is one of mplementarity and not competition. **It worth remembering that even if we hieve a 90,000 tonnes polyester ple fibre capacity by 1985, it will only about 6% of the Sixth Plan projection cotton consumption that year.**

econdly, there is a fear in certain arters that encouragement of lyester staple fibre production could d to the development of a cotton rplus in the country. **While a nificant cotton surplus would seem hly unlikely for some time to come, a e reflection would show that if this s happen, it would in fact be to the ntry's advantage because of the ort possibilities it offers.**

The multi-fibre strategy calls for a harmonious balance of all the different major fibre varieties that feature in our textile economy. This strategy flows logically from our natural endowments -a rich soil which makes us one of the leading cotton producers in the world, forests which provide the starting raw material for viscose, aromatic rich crude oil which gives us para-xylene whose most logical use is in the manufacture of DMT — the main raw material for polyester fibre. While cotton is the chief fibre in our textile industry, international experience has shown that admixture with a synthetic like polyester enhances the properties of cotton. **A 50:50 polyester/cotton blend for example is 3 times more durable than pure cotton cloth.** This upgradation of cotton means for the country a better utilisation of resources — if instead of producing 3 metres, only 1 metre needs to be produced, then resources, not the least of which is energy, are free for use elsewhere. For the average man it means that his money goes a longer way. **An additional benefit offered by polyester staple fibre is the higher productivity obtained by textile mills through its use.** Polyester fibre by virtue of its mechanical strength helps to reduce the frequency of breakages both at the spinning and at the weaving stages. This acquires special importance in the power deficit areas where scarce diesel has to be used in generators and the energy output ratio assumes added significance.

I can continue cataloguing the benefits and spin-offs of polyester staple fibre manufacture — but what I have said should suffice to highlight the fact that this industry is not an artificial transplant on to the total textile system, but part of the process of its organic growth — that **polyester staple fibre complements rather than supplements the cotton growth in India.**

The point I wish to emphasise is that **the country needs a parallel development of both cotton and man-made fibres.** I have, therefore, spent some time today in clarifying the role of the polyester fibre industry in the textile economy of the country. If the logic of its existence is to be accepted then the pre-requisite of its continued health must not be denied it. It is gratifying to see that the Budget proposals have taken an important step in charting a path for the recovery of the industry. I would reiterate my hope that this presages further positive moves aimed at enlarging the market. I would also like to emphasise the need to consider restricting imports. With international crude prices dropping, foreign polyester staple fibre manufacturers would be in a position to once again enter the Indian market at prices unremunerative to local manufacturers. I am sure this factor will be taken cognizance of at the time of the formulation of the new Import Policy.

IMPROVEMENT TARGETS

I would like to conclude today by reiterating that whatever the environmental difficulties, **your Company firmly believes that efforts must not slacken to increase its own strengths and improve on its own performance.** To this end the plant modernisation programme is progressing apace; the high tenacity fibre capacity has been increased to meet the demand; work on waste-recovery and productivity improvements is advancing; and working capital control, in which area, significant improvement was achieved last year, is continuing to receive the highest priority.

(This does not purport to be a report of the proceedings of the Annual General Meeting of the Company referred to above)

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A Second Cold War

BOTH THE capitalist and socialist systems are now simultaneously passing through a period of convulsive internal stresses; so preoccupying that there is not the slightest chance of that North-South redistribution of resources which wishful thinkers in the 'developing' world speak of. The two superpowers in particular are afflicted by combined and deepening social and economic crises, which drive them both into stances of increasing mutual belligerency. But more serious still, their problems—though taking distinct forms—are also mutually reinforcing.

Thus the Americans need the Russians, need Afghanistan, need Poland, to justify the arms race, which is indispensable to the refuelling of its flagging economy through headlong rearmament. And the Russians need the Americans' crude anti-communism and cowboy pistol-toting to convince the sceptics and dissidents in their own ranks of the superior virtues of the socialist system. Above all, their mutual rivalry is essential to the vested interests of the now vast military-industrial complexes in both countries.

At a time of rising unemployment in the US, falling industrial production—the gross domestic product fell by 4.7 per cent in the last quarter of 1981—and increasing business failures, the staggering planned expenditure of $766,000 million (Rs 6,89,400 crore) on the American arms budget for the next three years therefore has a clear and terrible logic. Unemployment among US teenagers has reached 22.3 per cent; among black youth it is an astounding 42.3 per cent, and inexorably rising. Sabre-rattling by the American state, flexing its muscles like a gangster looking for a victim, and the use of its industrial capacities for destructive ends, is a function of its crisis. By the mid-80s the US will possess some 10,000 strategic nuclear warheads; but only 5 per cent of this total—500—would destroy the Soviet Union. This is overkill with a vengeance.

Divided Spoils: Ironically, more than 60 years ago, a similar hardship imposed a process of forced accumulation on the Soviet Union, as well as the harsh centralisation of its economy and polity in order to feed its people, fight off its enemies, internal and external, and build up its industrial infrastructure. During the 1930s, in the wake of the first modern capitalist crisis, European rearmament and the Nazi challenge then forced on the Soviet Union a second wave of ruthless development—now called Stalinism—which helped, at a huge cost, to save Europe from fascism. The post-war Yalta Conference of 1945 divided the spoils of Europe: the 'East' for Stalin, the 'West' for Roosevelt and Churchill. It was war booty.

The Marshall Plan, and the First Cold War in the 1950s, served to consolidate this division. The first helped to rebuild post-war capitalism in Western Europe, and the second to justify the process of remilitarisation in peacetime, which has never ended. We are now in the midst of the Second Cold War, an immensely accelerated bout of rearmament, and an economic crisis as deep and pervasive as that of the 1930s.

As for the Soviet Union, it is once again driven by the compulsions of competition between the superpowers—as any capitalist firm is driven, if it wishes to survive—to compete with its rivals. North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) and the Warsaw Pact, the European Economic Community (ECE) and Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon), and the mutual deterrence of the US and the Soviet Union, are two sides of exactly the same coin. Yet, as has always been the case since the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, the Soviet Union is significantly weaker militarily—despite the rhetoric of the Reagan warmongers—and very much weaker economically than the US is, despite the severity of the latter's current economic crisis.

And Reagan, politically bankrupt and amoral though he may be, is nevertheless sufficiently right when, referring to the Soviet Union, he pointed out a few weeks ago that "sixty-five years after their Revolution they still need the West to feed their people". This is, in part, because of a run of poor harvests due to bad weather, and in part because so much of Soviet resources, scientific, technical and infrastructural, have been directed since 1945 to heavy industrial reconstruction, space technology and defence, rather than agriculture. But the truth remains, as Leonid Brezhnev admitted last November to the Communist Party of Soviet Union's (CPSU) Central Committee, that food still remains Russia's biggest economic and political problem. In 1982, there will be a record 43 million tonnes of grain imports—to which Reagan, himself crudely struggling with America's worst economic crisis in 50 years, was alluding—into the Soviet Union. Moreover, as the US economy staggers, the Soviet Union has also failed to meet almost every economic target in the first year of its 1981—86 Five-Year Plan.

Socially, too the structural unhealth of the one is matched by the unhealth of the other. Competitive consumerism and competitive militarisation, the sharing of inflation as the result of many forms of economic interaction, and the reciprocal ideological warfare in which each serves the other as justification for further paranoia, all reinforce regressive tendencies in both systems. The case is similar now, as the world shrinks, with waves of rebellion and internal disorder; more covert and subterranean in the Soviet Union than in East Germany, Poland, Hungary or Czechoslovakia, but a reflection of similar revolts of the people against bureaucratism, misgovernment, unmet needs and other forms of economic chaos. Prague in 1968 was not much different from Paris in 1968.

Advantage: So that Poland, despite the efforts of an economically embattled West to turn events there to its own political advantage, is not of unique significance. In any case, it is the mirror image of most western nations: a combination of economic crisis, increasingly authoritarian rule, popular revolt and state repression, with which we are all familiar. Certainly it exposes the hypocrisy of western leaders: secretly relieved at the Polish crackdown, but publicly shedding crocodile tears for the union rights of Polish workers, while attacking the trade unions in their own countries.

Thus Lech Walesa, the Polish Solidarity leader, has become a hero in an America itself racked by crisis. But had he been an American trade union leader, he would have soon felt the lash of ruling class disfavour with its curbs on trade union rights—like Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA)—and the rest of its repressive apparatus for maintaining democratic freedoms. Worst of all, now that strike organisers in Poland are getting 6, 8 and 10 year jail sentences, it becomes clearer that the oppression of the working class in the name of capital, and the oppression of the working class in the name of labour, offer no choice between them. So that the fact that Poland adopted emergency military rule on December 13, 1981, and subordinated the Party to the Army, is merely one more example of global tendencies in the same direction. It is hardly a propaganda coup for the West or the 'free world', with its Pakistans, Turkeys, El Salvadors and Chiles, to say nothing of Emergency India. A symptom of the turbulence caused by economic disorder, inflation, crises of rising expectations, popular resistance, and the universal need of privileged minorities—of a class, or a ca

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or a family or a party—to retain their power, it is hardly a novel world development, even if it is a relative rarity within the socialist system.

Seeking Solutions: Energy-dependent consumer societies—whether capatalist or socialist—hell bent on the maximisation of private interest and competition, all travel by the same path to perdition. The watchwords of the resulting bouts of repression are always the same, whatever the economic system: vigilance, work discipline, higher production and public order, in the name of national salvation. Marshal W. Jaruzelski, Poland's new leader, claimed that martial law had not only prevented an 'anti-communist coup' but had 'probably prevented the outbreak of the Third World War'. It was very much like that in India, too, between 1975 and 1977: similar rhetoric, the same negative long-term results, the 'solution' worse than the original problem.

Poland, therefore, is not a subject for the 'free world' to crow about. After all, it cannot even afford economic sanctions against the Soviet Union because of its own precarious economic condition. Nevertheless, though not unique, the Polish events constitute the biggest socio-economic and political upheaval since the Second World War in Eastern Europe. More serious than Hungary in 1956, or Czechoslovakia in 1968, the political demands of the Polish Solidarity movement—described by a Hungarian journalist as "the most significant peaceful revolutionary movement since the days of Gandhi"—were impossible to meet: not merely workers' self-management, but free association, free elections, a referendum on Poland's membership of the Warsaw Pact, and an end to party hegemony over the state apparatus. They called it 'renewal', but it woud have a revolution, and would have blown a great hole in the defensive ring around the Soviet Union.

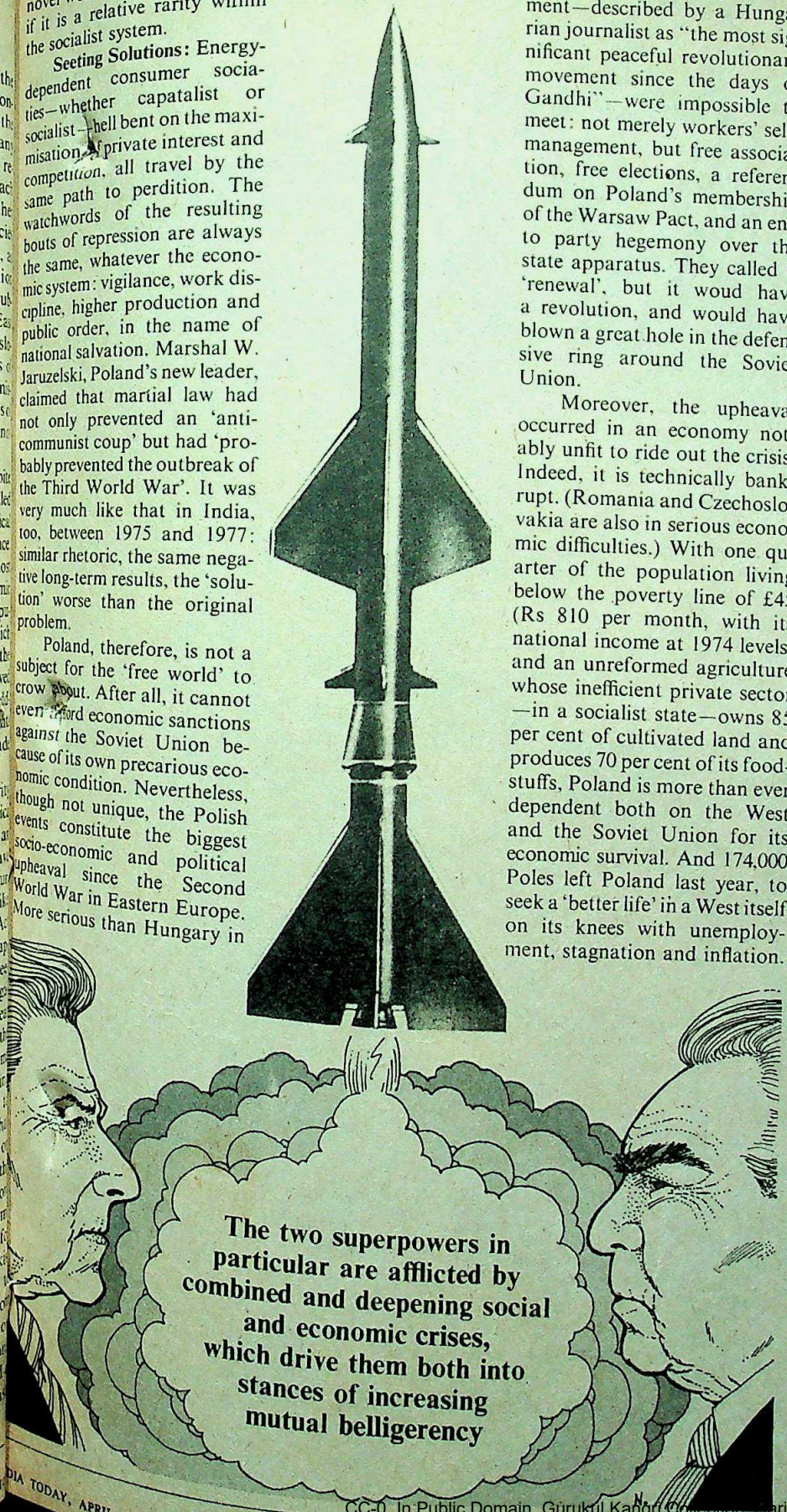
Moreover, the upheaval occurred in an economy notably unfit to ride out the crisis. Indeed, it is technically bankrupt. (Romania and Czechoslovakia are also in serious economic difficulties.) With one quarter of the population living below the poverty line of £45 (Rs 810 per month, with its national income at 1974 levels, and an unreformed agriculture whose inefficient private sector —in a socialist state—owns 85 per cent of cultivated land and produces 70 per cent of its foodstuffs, Poland is more than ever dependent both on the West and the Soviet Union for its economic survival. And 174,000 Poles left Poland last year, to seek a 'better life' in a West itself on its knees with unemployment, stagnation and inflation.

There is a tragic irony in all this. On t one hand, Poland's debts to 460 Weste banks are so large—27 billion dollars (24,300 crore)—that if it defaulted on their r payment, it could trigger off a series of ba collapses which took us back to the W Street crash, so vulnerable is the US ec nomy, despite its institutional safeguard On the other hand, for the Soviet Union t bale Poland out—as it has just done wi loans of $5.4 billion, (Rs 4,860 crore), s that Poland can buy vital raw materials— an increasing burden in the midst of its ow economic crisis. And the ultimate irony Poland has applied to join the Internationa Monetary Fund (IMF). (And will pay as larg a political price for it as India.)

Thus, never was the interdependence o the world order so obvious, not its rearma ment for mutual destruction so fevered Unable, and unwilling, to change in the face of systemic crises, misuse of productive resources and resulting social disturbance, neither of the superpowers has the political resilience to deal peacefully with the consequences of economic distortion and deterioration. And though it is the capitalist market economies which are doing marginally worse than the socialist and developing ones, it is the Soviet Union which is sitting on the largest volcano, even if it is still relatively unscathed by the pressures which have surfaced in poland.

In the last three weeks, the Soviet Chief-of-Staff, Marshal Ogarkov, has warned the Soviet people against "the spread of pacifist views among the youth", as the Western peace movement's echoes, already resounding loudly in East Germany, reach the Soviet Union. Similarly, the head of the Soviet trade unions, Alexei Shivayev, has been dismissed for "bureaucratism, high-handedness and inertia", as the alarm-bells set off by Solidarity ring in the corridors of Soviet power.

And as the Soviet Union with its inferior economic resources is once again in its history driven desperately to meet the challenge of America's insane proposal to spend $221,000 million (Rs 1,98,900 crore) on arms in 1982, Marshal Ogarkov's arguments also have their own logic. He has just said that Russia requires "a stable centralized system of leadership of the country and the armed forces", and "an even greater concentration of management". After all, each of the new US fleet of Trident submarines will carry a destructive force 1,000 times that which wiped out Hiroshima. But this is also the tragic politics of the arms race, and of the growth of despotic power—of which Poland, on the one hand, and El Salvador, on the other, are merely the latest, and relatively insignificant indirect victims. They are destined soon to be overtaken by others.



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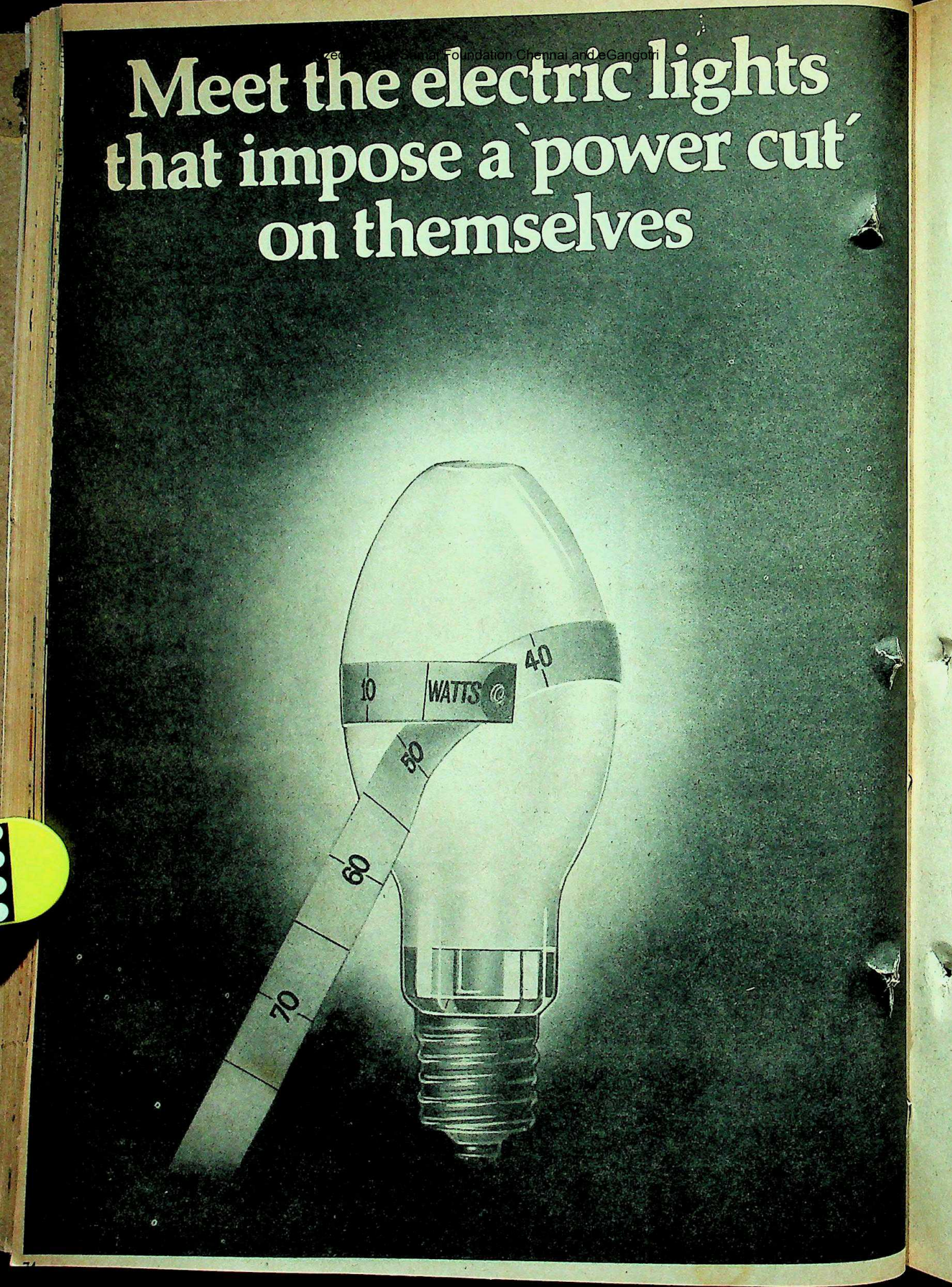
Meet the electric lights that impose a `power cut´ on themselves



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Over the years the lighting industry has been working to develop lamps of ever increasing efficiency.

Peico with their access to Philips technology have developed a whole new breed of lamps for this power-scarce world. Lamps and lighting systems that offer more light output per watt at minimum cost.

Lamps with a 'built-in' sense of responsibility

The new breed of high-efficiency lamps economises on its electricity consumption without economising on the amount of illumination it gives. And since the lamps consume less energy, they are much less expensive in operation and more than pay for themselves in use.

Emitting more light out of less electricity

For instance, the Argenta Superlux lamp. It directs most of the light downwards. Thus giving you 30% more light where you need it than other lamps of the same wattage. Or take the Philips TL series of fluorescent lamps(i.e. tube lights designed for homes and offices and shops) which emit five times the amount of light as that of a GLS lamp of comparable wattage and have five times the life.

The ML 160W blended light lamp can replace a GLS 200W lamp giving the same luminous output but at 20% less electrical load.

And in the case of halogen lamps(for floodlighting and area lighting), the life of the lamp has been increased to 2000 burning hours compared to 1000 burning hours of a GLS lamp. Compared to a GLS lamp its efficiency is 18% more and its life span is double. Hence, tremendous energy saving could be obtained by its use.

And the High Pressure Sodium Vapour lamp (for lighting streets, outdoor areas and factories) saves you 35% power over the High-Pressure Mercury Vapour lamp.

There's a whole range of other power saving lamps that has been developed for every application: for lighting streets, factories, offices, shops and homes. This table shows how you can put the lamps to use to save power — effortlessly.

If you are using	Switch to	Power Saving
GLS 100W Incandescent lamp	Argenta Superlux 60W Bowl Reflector 60W	40%
GLS 150/200/300W Incandescent lamp	Comptalux 75/100/150W Reflector lamp	50%
GLS 200W Incandescent lamp	ML 160W Blended lamp	20%
ML 160W Blended lamp	HPL 80W Mercury Vapour lamp	42%
HPL 400W Mercury Vapour lamp	SON 250W Sodium Vapour lamp	35%
GLS 1000W Incandescent lamp	Halogen 1000W lamp	18%

By switching over to these power saving lamps a significant amount of savings can be achieved. Even a saving of 10% in total lighting if effected, would meet the additional requirements of domestic and industrial lighting. Our country needs all the watts it can find. Let's make a beginning — in our homes, in offices and in industries.

If you would like to know more about saving energy through planned lighting, write to: Peico Electronics and Electricals Limited, Lighting Division, Band Box Bldg., 2nd floor, Dr. Annie Besant Road, Worli, Bombay 400 025.

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UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

A Conflict Of Interests

Armed Forces Headquarters in Abu Dhabi: the bait that netted a controversial catch

THE advertisements appeared all over the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the tightly-knit federation of seven Gulf states, in February. Since the vacancies advertised were for the UAE's defence establishment, one of the best paymasters in the country, 800 Asians, including 262 Indians, turned up at the spacious premises of the Armed Forces Headquarters in Abu Dhabi, for the initial screening. The screening, however, was of an entirely different nature.

Instead of jobs what they received was unnecessarily rough treatment, a spell in jail under subhuman conditions and finally, the Damocles Sword that hangs constantly over the Indian population in the Middle East—deportation. Though the strictly-censored local media briefly described the event as a "round-up of illegal immigrants" it gradually became obvious that a majority of the Asians deported were not illegal immigrants at all but people with proper residence visas and work permits looking for a better job.

By last fortnight, all the 262 Indians arrested had been repatriated, but the bitterness caused by the incident has nullified painstaking efforts during the last nine months since Mrs Gandhi's visit to develop ties between India and the UAE on a new plane. For the 250,000-strong Indian community in the UAE, the episode was yet another reminder that their massive presence in this oil-rich country is not welcome.

Shocking Treatment: If the indiscriminate arrest of Asians, many of whom were legal immigrants, was in shocking violation of all the laws of the land, even more deplorable was the way they were treated during detention. Four hundred men were lodged in a jail in Sharjah equipped with just two toilets and a kitchen that can, at the best of times, be used to feed 30 to 40 people.

Diplomats seeking meetings with the prisoners were sent from one ministry to another for weeks. The Pakistani and Bangladeshi missions soon gave up all efforts to help their nationals, but when the Indian ambassador strongly protested to the court of President Shaikh Zayed, his staff was finally allowed into the jail.

According to accounts given by the prisoners, immigrants with valid legal papers were not allowed to contact their sponson or the Indian mission, but were put on country craft and repatriated to India. Those who were left behind had to pay 10 dirhams (Rs 25) each time they used the phone to contact their relatives, sponsors or the Indian mission. Visits by relatives of prisoners are allowed every Friday (weekly holiday) but jail officials charged 20 dirhams (Rs 50) for each visit.

Legal Veneer: Friends and relatives said that the chappatis given to the prisoners were made with a mixture of flour and sand. The Ministry of Interior, meanwhile, worked overtime to give a legal veneer to the entire operation. Some sponsors were asked to declare their employees among the detainees as absconders, an offence punishable under law. Others without proper residence papers were produced in court in batches, convicted and sent home on country craft.

For more than two years, the UAE Government has been engaged in a futile effort to reduce the number of Asians in the country and increase the Arab labour force

Indian workers in Dubai: not welcome

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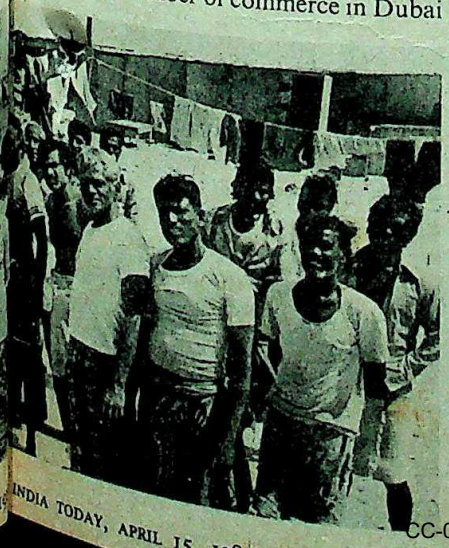
But progress in this direction has not been fast enough to satisfy the populist Arab media and the administration has now apparently decided to disregard the law in their campaign to reduce Asian immigrants.

Amendments to labour rules preventing change of sponsorship and a campaign, two years ago, against violators of this rule only had a peripheral effect on this problem. The results of UAE's first census last year further aggravated the Government's concern over the massive Asian presence. Census details on the break-up of nationalities has so far been withheld on the instructions of President Shaikh Zayed, but according to Planning Ministry sources, 90 per cent of the labour force in the UAE is made up of expatriates. Of the total number of people living in the country, no more than 25 per cent are its own nationals. Indians constitute the single largest group of immigrants while people from the subcontinent together account for nearly 50 per cent of the population.

Unequal Wages: The UAE has now signed agreements with Sudan, Morocco and Tunisia to import labour from these countries "to reduce the imbalance in population", but private employers are unwilling to try out nationalities they are not familiar with, especially at higher wages than is given to Asians. Says Saif Ahmed Al Ghurair, Dubai's leading entrepreneur and president of the local chamber of commerce: "In this respect, we face two obstacles. The first is the non-availability of certain categories of labour from Arab countries. The second is the inability of Arab labour to compete wage-wise with the Asians."

Although the Government is aware of the difficulties in bringing more people from these and other Arab countries, it is also in the unhappy situation of having to appease a sizeable and vocal section of the population and the media on this issue. Government firms have been instructed to give preference in recruitment to UAE nationals and then citizens of other Arab countries. The quasi-government chamber of commerce in Dubai has also issued a circular to its 8,000-odd members asking them to seek government assistance in employing more UAE citizens and other Arab nationals, especially people from Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia.



Some business houses have decided to toe the Government line. Al Futtaims, the second largest business house in Dubai, is understood to have decided not to renew the contracts of several top Indian executives and among those leaving the group is S. Buddhiraja, former managing director of the Indian Oil Corporation. In Sharjah, the Indian vice-president of a group of companies owned by Shaikh Abdul Aziz bin Mohamed Al Qasimi, brother of the ruler, has been replaced by a Palestinian while at the chamber of commerce there, the Indian secretary who set up the organisation nearly 11 years ago has been fired.

Empty Words: Senior UAE government officials deny that they are discriminating against Asians or that they plan to get rid of the entire non-Arab labour force. Khalfan Khamis, under-secretary (equivalent in rank to deputy minister) in the Ministry of Interior argues that "to give priority to Arab workers is not to indicate racial or any other sort of discrimination. It is a matter dictated by the interest of state and its stability."

In the same breath, he asserts: "Crime has risen considerably in the UAE as a result of increase in the number of migrant workers. Crimes unknown here have appeared. Even our citizens who commit crimes are mostly influenced by foreign habits." Adds Ahmed Al Jumeiri, under-secretary in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs: "The policy of Arabisation of labour force is designed to eliminate the present disparity between Arab and non-Arab labour. It is not a device to throw expatriates out of jobs overnight."

Meanwhile, in a study on planning, the governor of the UAE Central Bank, Abdul Malik Al Hamar, has predicted, much to the chagrin of the Government that the number of foreign workers in the Gulf will increase to four and a half million by 1985 and the number of Indians and Pakistanis to 566,000. He said foreigners in the Gulf totalled three million in 1975. Of this, Indians and Pakistanis accounted for only 250,000, he added. The prediction, however, rings hollow given the present attitude of the Government. In what appears to be a blatantly Machiavellian ploy, the UAE Government is resorting to any excuse, real or imagined, to justify the repatriation of large numbers of Asian migrant workers. As such, though the lure of the Gulf will remain undiminished, for the Asians it will be an increasingly elusive El Dorado.

—ALI ZARIN in Bahrain

US IMMIGRANTS

The Paper Chase

IN the space of roughly 10 years Indians have become one of the most visible ethnic groups in New York City. Operating behind the counter of newspaper kiosks they can be found everywhere—in the subways, on the streets, inside large office buildings. Through sheer hard work and stamina they have taken over one of the toughest small businesses in the US—tough in terms of long hours and dangerous locations.

Bernard Green, president of Eastern Distribution Company, which owns 120 stands in buildings in the city, says it is the low labour cost and natural merchant skills that make the Asians successful in such a business. "They were merchants back home. They have strength in numbers. They put the entire family to work and eliminate payroll problems. They go where Americans fear to tread. Operating news-stands at subway stations and on the streets is a rough and difficult business." Another reason for hiring Indians, claims Martin Green, executive vice-president of Eastern, is that: "Asians are willing to work longer hours. They are very dedicated and one member is always helping the other. There is also a high incidence of personal integrity."

Manhattan news-stand: the new frontier

Mohan Shah, a successful entrepreneur, who has his finger on the Indian business pulse in New York pointed out that it is

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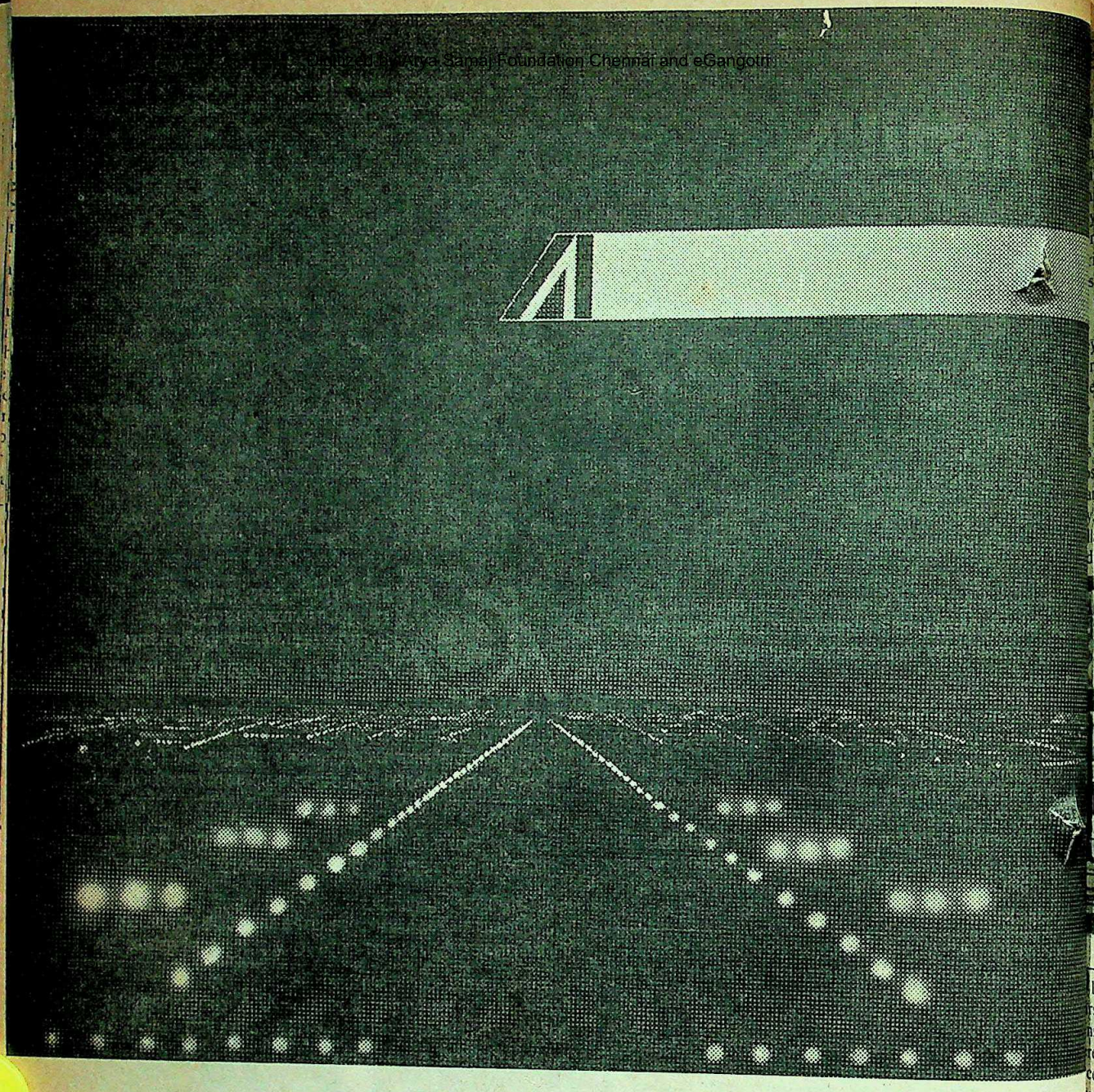

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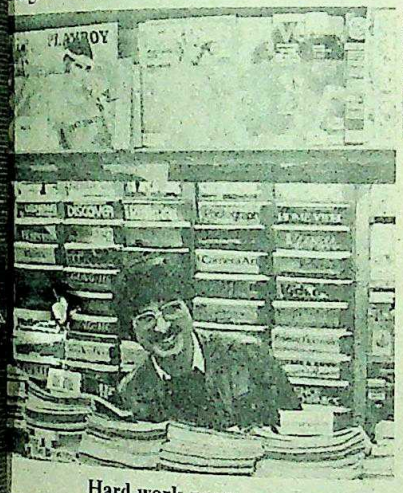
nly Indians from East Africa, of Gujarati Muslim origin, who are in this trade. ey arrived in this country in 1974-75, ng the terror of Ugandan President Idi in. They escaped with as much capital as could. The US Government granted m the status of political refugees. In East ica they were successful businessmen. It s natural that they should find an outlet their talents here." From India, most of immigrants come from Gujarat, where y owned small businesses. Others come m Bombay or Delhi where urban eeling-dealing has accustomed them to ways of operating a street business.

Success Stories: There are success sto- at all levels. Tarik Amin runs a newspaper k in chic, commercial midtown nhattan. His business averages $3,000 a which works out to a little over a million lars a year, and he works from 7 a.m. to night. "I have never worked so hard in



RANJANA KIPPLE

Hard work pays

life," says Amin. "I came to the US two rs ago from Bombay where my family ns a small business. The only thing I did re was hang around with friends. Nobody ces me to work hard. It's my business and un it with my brother. But if you work rd you make a lot of money."

A few rungs up the ladder is Raman tel who has been in the kiosk business for years. His brother, Prabhu, explains that ginally the business needed low capital estment and guaranteed huge profits. en years ago you could build a business h a few 1,000 dollars. Now this is no ger true. Stories of success spread by rd of mouth and demand for the kiosks hed up the prices." The Patels, one of the barons in the business, own 10 kiosks on New York-New Jersey rail route.

The most impressive success story, ho- er, is that of Bhawnesh and Suresh oor. Starting out in the garment trade, took over a kiosk in the Wall Street area 979. Today they hold the master lease, which cost them $321,000, for all the kiosks on the Long Island Railroad, America's longest commuter train operation. Says Bhawnesh Kapoor: "It was very difficult obtaining the master lease from the Metropolitan Transport Authority. We had to convince them that our service would be better than our competitors', that we'd stay open longer, and have more professional displays."

Ample Rewards: Of the 42 kiosks on the Long Island Railroad, 31 have been sub-leased by the Kapoors and 11 they operate themselves. At a good location the day's earnings can be as much as $2,000. Since there is no receipt of sale and all transactions are in cash, rent and taxes are usually fixed on estimates.

The situation, however, is not without its drawbacks. Banks are not willing to give credit because all business transactions are done in cash and there are no capital assets. Also for Indians, there are lingering social inhibitions. Said one news-stand vendor who wanted to remain anonymous: "There is no dignity in this business. It is like running a *paan-bidi* operation."

Because of this social stigma, the newspaper kiosk business, though lucrative, is still regarded only as a stepping stone to better things. Typical of this is Shridhar Patel, an Indian born in Kenya with a degree in pharmacology from Gujarat. Arriving in the US with his family two years ago, he realised that to pursue his line he would have to pass some tough qualifying examinations. Not being fluent in English his chances of passing were dim.

A neighbour advised him to contact the owner of a subway news kiosk who was looking for help. Today at 24, Patel makes $600 a day, of which his profit is $100, more than what a fresh graduate from Harvard makes. In spite of the financial rewards, Patel intends to save enough money to pay his way through medical school.

This pattern is explained by Ben Ravicoff, who represents Ancorp, a 90-year-old distribution company that holds the master lease for all subway kiosks: "This business goes in cycles. Every 10 years or so a new wave of immigrants buys out the previous owners. Most new immigrants face language and educational barriers and this business requires minimum skills. During the war years the business was owned primarily by Jewish immigrants. In the post-war period it was the Hispanics. Recently there has been a concentration of Asians, mostly Indians and Pakistanis." The message seems to be that the Indians are treading the path laid down by past generations of immigrants—and, in the language of New York, taking a juicier bite out of the Big Apple.

—TASNEEM ZAKARIA in New York

OBJET D'ART

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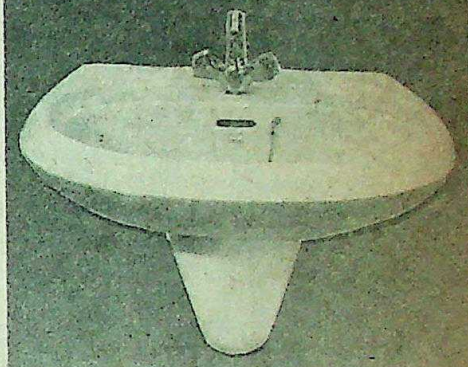

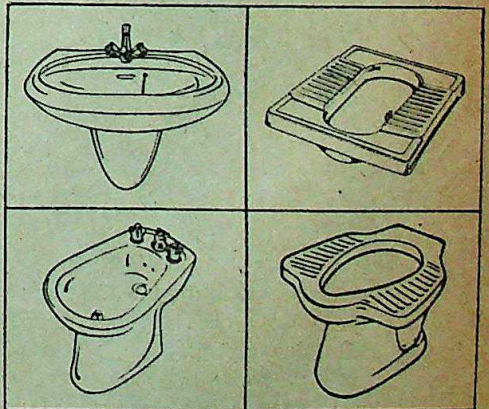

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DRUG ADDICTION

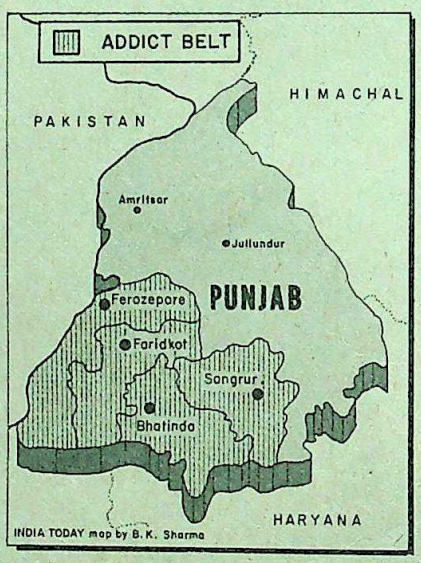
The Poisoning Of Punjab

THE emerald green wheat fields stretched for miles, justifying the words on a hoarding at the border—"Punjab, granary of India". Tucked away deep in the interior, uncharted except perhaps on a detailed map of district Bhatinda, lay village Khillan, population: 1,200. But despite the surface tranquillity, Khillan was a village in turmoil. The reason: Khillan has been blitzed by the menace of drug addiction. In the last six months eight men have died due to drugs.

On March 15, when INDIA TODAY visited the village, the men of Khillan were mourning the death of yet another victim. Under the influence of a tablet locally known as *sau numbri* (number 100) the man had fallen into a sewer and, being too drugged to lift his head out of the water, had drowned.

Villagers call the drug *sau numbri* because that weight—100 milligrams—is stamped on the tablet. The actual drug may be either sovenal or seconal, both barbiturates. Many other types of intoxicating synthetic drugs are also sold—some of them morphine-based, others are amphetamines or the methaqualone-based Mandrax, now illegally manufactured and stamped "Bx" or "Sx". These drugs are comparatively recent additions to the traditionally used, plant-derived drugs such as poppy-husk, opium, hashish, marijuana and *dhatura*.

Technically Accidental: The village chowkidar reported the death in the tehsil headquarters at Mansa and it was entered in the register as "death by accident". The entry was technically correct and the authorities were content to leave it at that. The eighth victim, who died in the last week of January, had already caused enough complications. Then it had been unavoidably necessary to enter the cause of death as drug overdose which called for police action. The local supplier, Mahinder Singh, the priest of the village gurudwara (Sikh Temple) was arrested and tablets were recovered from their hiding place—allegedly, according to the villagers, under the cloth covering the holy book in the gurudwara. But two months after the incident Mahinder Singh was back in Khillan where he also functions as a *vaid*



Addict lying on a street: increasingly

(traditional doctor). (The nearest heal tre is three km away.) When INDIA met him in his room adjacent to the dwara, medicine bottles still clutter shelves. He hesitated to answer any question. "I am here to help others,"

In another village, Bangi, 25 km Bhatinda, drug-related deaths have r epidemic proportions—28 in the la alone. Said a resident, Sajjan Singh, Indian National Army havildar, "It's see young men die because of the *golis*." In yet another village Punjab-Haryana border, Nikki, year-old girl had died under the in drugs. As an infant, her ever-busy frequently gave her opium to keep he and she simply grew up with the habit time ago her 15-year-old brother, hoo *sau numbri*, introduced her to the On the day of her death she had wa into the courtyard of her house whe buffaloes were fighting and was caug ween them, suffering a massive blow head. She was carried into the hou alive but to relieve the pain her famil

Bhatinda SSP Bhullar and, right, pill supplier Mahinder Singh

PHOTOS BY ASOKA RAINA

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more tablets and she died. The 7,000 bitants of her village were stunned but this tragedy did not persuade her her to kick the habit—he simply can't.

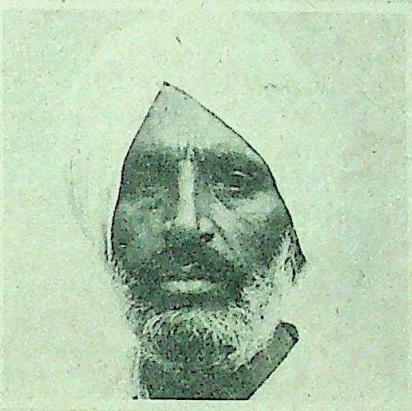
Unrecorded: Nikki's death was not re-ded as a drug-related death and there ld be many other such cases whose full umstances will never be entered in any ial register. As a result, neither the state the Central Government views the pro-m of rural drug abuse seriously. The ial attitude is "it can't happen here". But ral studies over the past five years reveal the threat is not only real but growing. dies by Dr Divendra Mohan of the All ia Institute of Medical Sciences, New hi, and Dr Gurmeet Singh of Medical lege, Patiala, have probed the consum-n patterns of alcohol, opium, bar-rates and cannabis in the region.

Among the 12 districts of Punjab, the icts Sangrur, Bhatinda, Faridkot and zepur are known as the "addiction ". In Dr Gurmeet Singh's 1977 study he d that although Punjab had one of the est crime rates—84.5 per 10,000 popu-on as compared to the all-India average 7.3—it recorded 7,580 offences under the um Act, approximately 70 per cent of the l offences in the entire country. His ey showed that 30 per cent of the ulation studied used drugs for non-ical purposes.

The problem is increasing. "The use of icants has increased by 100 per cent in last decade," he said. What has Singh ly worried is the increased use of bar-rates. "Barbiturates are a cheap com-nd (30 paisa per tablet as compared to Rs 10 for a bottle of country liquor) and the rising cost of opium, barbiturates are to replace both those intoxicants. Even people call the tablets *sukki sharrab* (dry or)." He is also starting to get cases of le addicted to injected drugs, chiefly adine and morphine. "We know Iran ienced a shift from opium to heroin. If in were available here they would take it thank God, I haven't seen heroin ad-yet."

HE problem is increasing," confirms Bhatinda Senior Superintendent of Police G.S. Bhullar. The number of he has been able to register are indica-of the amount of drug-running in the Last year 1,286 drug carriers were ed and for 1982 his tally has already ed 255. This he admits is only a fraction at is going on. "With only 20 police-or every unit of about 50 villages how a watch can they keep?" he asks. ding to Bhullar, drugs come into Pun-om three sides: Nepal, Pakistan and than. Although heroin has been inter-

Raj Inder Singh: on tablets



Jarnail Singh: beyond hope

Gurbachan Singh: ruined health

PHOTOS BY GURMEL SINGH SRA

Hakam Singh: a teenage start

ADDICTS

A Lifelong Habit

TO PRESENT the human face of Punjab's drug problem INDIA TODAY *interviewed several addicts in Bhatinda district. Their comments reveal what drugs cost these individuals in terms of their health, productivity, and social relationships.*

Raj Inder Singh, alias Baba, 60, of village Ghudda supports a family of seven from his 10 acres. "Twenty-five years ago I started taking opium. But then opium cultivation and sale was banned and the stuff became more expensive so I switched to the tablets." His dose is now around 10 barbiturate tablets per day. He is careful to feed his livestock before taking the pills; otherwise he says under the effect of drugs he forgets.

Jarnail Singh, alias Zailder, 45, also of Ghudda, was a rich farmer with 40 acres but childless. He started taking poppy husk when he was 15, then graduated to opium and finally barbiturates. As a result of one drug binge he had to sell off a major portion of his property. Befuddled by drugs, he approached a money-lender for Rs 200 and was made to sign on a blank paper. When he sobered up, his creditor confronted him with a document recording a loan of Rs 5,000 with Rs 1,500 as principal on it. His family despairs over his habit but "they have given up hope of reforming me."

Gurbachan Singh, 48, of village Bangi is a small farmer with three acres and a family of six. "When I was young I could yoke my camel and plough the land even when I was drunk—sober, I could lift the camel," he says. Today, he admits thirty years of drug-taking have ruined his health. He takes 75 grams of poppy husk daily plus a dose of opium or barbiturates if he can afford them.

Hakam Singh, 35, of village Bangi, started taking drugs when he was 12. Presently he needs 75 grams of poppy husk and five tablets every day. He has already sold off his four-acre share of the family property. He is not working and since he has no land of his own now and his reputation as a drug-addict is well-known the family is unable to get him married. When interviewed he thought this reporter would have influence to get him a "licence" to get tablets cheaply. "Please ask them to let me have 20 tablets a day," he said.

—GURMEL SINGH SRA

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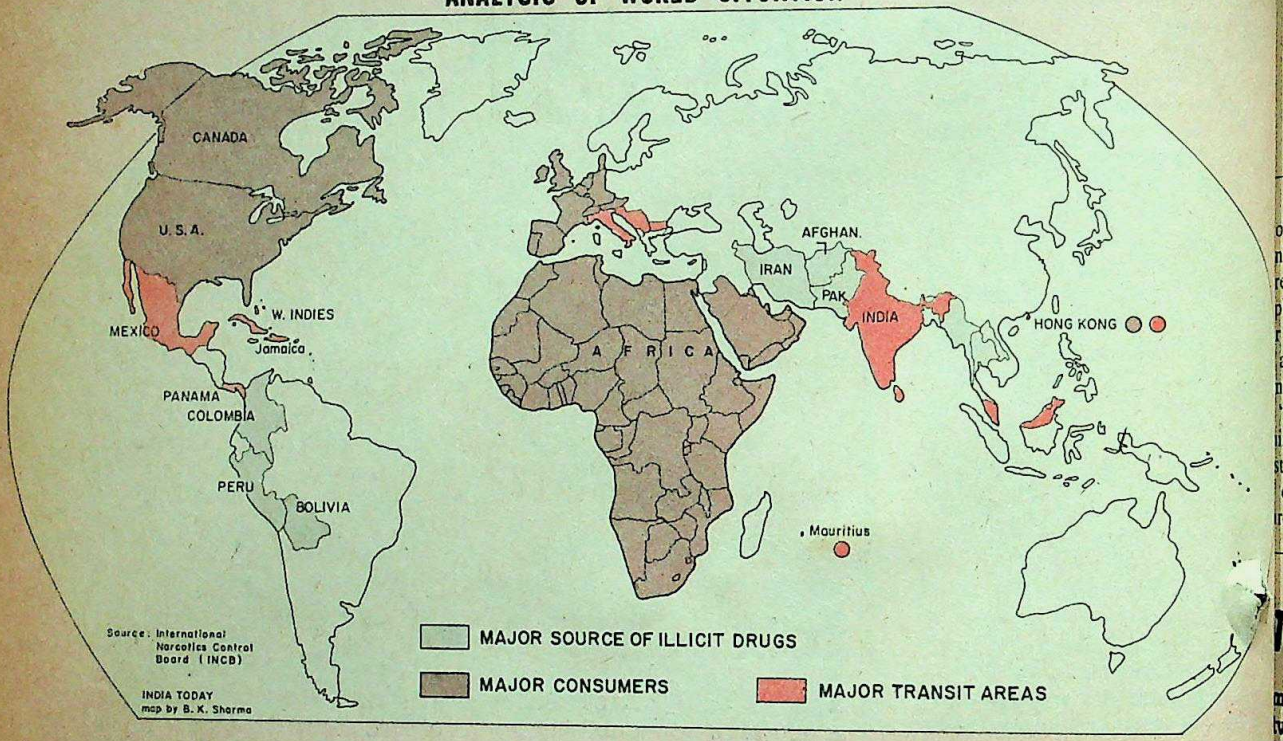
cepted coming from Pakistan it is not meant for the local market—at least not so far.

As Bhullar sees it, the crux of the problem is the mushrooming number of registered medical practitioners (RMPS). Explained Dr Raj Kumar Singla, past president of the Punjab Medical Association who practices in Bhatinda: "These RMPS have usually worked with real doctors for a few months learning how to give injections and acquiring a rudimentary knowledge of drugs. They get themselves certified as RMPS and then go open their own 'dispensaries' in the villages. They are quacks and selling these drugs is their major source of profit."

To make an even bigger profit off the trade the drug peddlars adulterate their wares. Said J.R. Gupta, a small-town chemist, "The suppliers have started to terate and duplicate all forms of drug even opium." Bournvita's dark-brow our makes it the ideal additive to s opium and an imitation opium is ma mixing strychnine (a deadly poison) barbiturates into a base of burnt jag "What we sold to kill rats is now being to kill people," he said.

ANALYSIS OF WORLD SITUATION



NARCOTICS CONTROL

Limited Success

DESPITE the international community's efforts to date, drug abuse throughout most of the world has not decreased. On the contrary, it has spread and the situation continues to deteriorate. Of particular concern is that the victims include adolescents and even children.

Geographically, more and more countries are afflicted, both developing and developed. Drugs of greater potency are widely available and consumed in more hazardous ways. These were some of the conclusions made by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) in Vienna last month. Paul Reuter, president of INSB states that the situation has never been more complex or more serious. The estimated three-fold increase in illicit production of opium in 1981 might well exceed 600 tonnes compared to the 200 tonnes produced in 1980. This adds a new dimension to the growing problem. Individual seizures had risen from 2113 in 1979 to 3635 in 1980. Said narcotic enforcement officials, this "represented only a fraction of the traffic and was no indicator of the total quantity in circulation." India too has emerged as a transit point. INDIA TODAY's earlier investigation (May 1-15, 81) brought out that point. Still Indian government official are not willing to view the problem seriously. Even when illegal drug manufacturers or smugglers are caught and convicted the punishments are too light to act as deterrents.

Heroin: Across the border in Pakistan, illicit traffic in morphine sulphate tablets manufactured in Pakistan had begun to surface. An even more ominous development is the illicit manufacture of high-purity heroin within the country with the mushrooming of heroin labs. Most of the heroin is destined for the West European and US markets. Narcotic enforcement agencies and experts viewed the new trend as a serious threat to the prospective Indian urban and rural markets. Within Pakistan, diversion of psychotropics substances from licit channels is beginning to find its way to new consumers. The main reason for the spread is ineffective control by the Pakistan authorities of the distribution networks of licit wholesalers and retailers of medicaments. The Pakistan problem is slowly being duplicated in Indian markets, both in rural and urban centres.

It is becoming obvious that serious drug control measures will have to be adopted requiring renewed awareness, vigilance and coordinated action. The INSB, trying to mobilise world governments to take part in a coordinated drug control measures, is making efforts to convince the United Nations to declare an International Year Against Drug Abuse. So far they have not succeeded.

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"It appears that till such time as mechanised farming becomes a reality, opium is a necessary evil and is the price being paid by farmers for earning Punjab the distinction of being called the granary of India."

DR GURMEET SINGH

The fake opium presents another oblem—as the police commented, "How n the fellow selling poisoned jaggery be rested under the Opium Act?" The sa-ples INDIA TODAY collected from the area r laboratory analysis proved the suspicion adulteration: the opium was only 50 per nt pure; the two types of tablets known "Bx" and "white escort" contained mor-ine and the tablet marked "seconal" was st chalk. But the stuff was cheap: 10 grams opium cost Rs 20 and 15 tablets were rchased for Rs 5, also indicating the easy availability of drugs.

Pattern Of Use: Villagers described the prevalent patterns of use. A typical opium addict makes 30 small pills from 10 grams of opium which lasts him for a month. Opium is commonly taken in the evening sitting with other men at neighbourhood gathering spots. Consumption occurs in a social context and most opium addicts belonged to the relatively better-off sections of village society. Consumption increases during the strenuous harvesting and tilling seasons—villagers said men could work for up to 14 hours at a stretch without feeling hunger, pain or fatigue. Their account conformed to Dr Gurmeet Singh's findings which state: "It appears that till such time as mechanised farming becomes a reality opium is a necessary evil and is the price being paid by farmers for earning Punjab the distinction of being called the granary of India."

Barbiturates showed a different pattern of use. Villagers described these men as burdens on their families. Men under the influence of synthetic drugs were easily identifiable by their inability to walk or even stand straight. They are said to take several tablets in the evening, sleep until noon the next day and then they require another tablet when they get up to steady their nerves.

The three areas INDIA TODAY visited constitute only a microscopic part of a problem prevalent in the entire state of Punjab. Earlier studies have clearly shown that the incidence of drug dependence is related to drug availability. Stringent action to control the problem is necessary—and quickly. Said Dr Mohan: "If the Government does not act now, by the year 2000 drug consumption will have reached critical proportions. It takes 20 years for any such problem to become visible."

—ASOKA RAINA and DONNA SURI in Bhatinda

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TAXING TALK

■ Anyone who thinks that the inky babus collecting dues and taxes in cities communicate in strong-man phrases of the "Ugh!", "Don't know", "Come tomorrow" and "Fill in triplicate" variety should read "An Appeal: Pay Your Corporation Tax" penned by an inspired scribe at the Calcutta Corporation.

The 200-word address issued in a daily newspaper begins with a coaxing catechism: "A modest question. Have you paid your share of Calcutta Corporation tax? If so, we welcome your civic sense... Is the tax levied on your house or building too much? No. On the contrary, it is equitable and well within your routine budget."

The prose moves on to greater things, such as a list of punitive measures—"Distress Warrant, seizure of movable goods, attachment and sale of immovable property, penalty and other deterrent steps."

Then comes the crescen "The personnel of Calcutta C rporation have since launche massive collection drive thro hout the length and breadth Calcutta. If you are in defa any day, at any point of t between sunrise and sun they may call on you at y doorsteps with a warra even, and this is the knock- punch, "in your absence" there anything left for the p householder to do but pay tax, "today, now"?

THE BARE TRUTH

■ The marks list scandal in Kerala has had at least one bizarre result. Because of it, N. Sadasivan Nair, a special grade peon of Kerala University, was driven to taking off his dhoti in public.

It happened like this. Nair had stood surety for some of his colleagues who had been suspended in connection with the crazy exam arithmetic. The authorities attached a large chunk of Nair's Rs 600 a month

salary, and he found himself with a pitifully thin take-home pay packet of Rs 120. To add insult to injury, his suspended colleagues were receiving Rs 300 a month as subsistence allowance.

The harassed peon reasoned that if he managed to get himself suspended as well, his pay would not get slashed and he would also receive subsistence allowance. Thus it was that on an eventful day last month, as police, students and other university staff jocke for position on the camp Nair created a diversion.

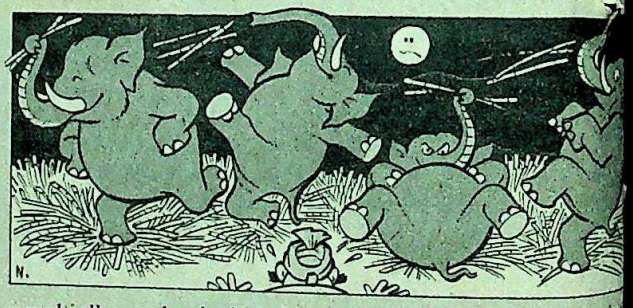
He burst into a crowd the lawns, staggering, obvio drunk. In a trice, he peeled his dhoti and gambolled on grass. After a few minutes was hauled away to a doc and then before a magistr when he learnt that Machiavellian strip-tease earned him a jail sentence of month and a fine of Rs 50— no suspension.

ELEPHANT WALTZ

■ It is midnight at the Tharalu estate in Bangalore South taluk, the moon is in the sky, bathing sugarcane and paddy fields in an eerie glow. At one end of the estate, there is an even eerier glow, accompanied by strange crackling sounds. It is firework time at Tharalu. The reason: elephants.

Estate owner M. Bayya Reddy has hired two men and is paying them Rs 100 a month just to light about 200 fireworks every night so that elephants from the neighbouring Bannerghata National Park are not tempted to do the rumba on his fields. At times, the park elephants are joined in their dancing lessons by rogue tuskers, driving precious crops to ruin and Reddy up the wall.

Sometimes, the fireworks lose their charm. On March 15, six of the huge animals—three from the park and three hoboes—crossed the border into Reddy's demesne and proceeded to go through their entire repertoire. This, besides the



usual jolly rumba, included the samba, the twist, a stately waltz and, to round it all off, a hip-shaking contortionist's delight imported from disco floors. The performance ended at five in morning, unfazed by an al ordered by a desperate Red It seems that the only hope that man is the Marines.

CROCODILE TEARS

■ Police in Salem and Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu, are scanning the horizon for P.V. Rajan. They want to get their hands on Rajan because he very neatly sold them a sob-story and got clean away.

On March 14, the Salem police found tears blurring their eyes when Rajan told them that his bag, containing cash and clothes, had been stolen from a bus. He also mentioned casually that his wife and child had died in a train accident in Delhi. The police promptly gave him money and a free ticket to Delhi, and then shrugged shoulders deprecatingly when the story got into the newspapers.

Tiruchi railway police read newspapers too, and after reading about all that milk of human kindness, sent a delegation to Salem to tell their blushing

brethren a story: Ra told the Tiruchi railway that his bag containing Rs and clothes had been st from the station waiting-ro The railway police helped with Rs 250 so that he could home. And home is w Rajan is now, unless he is bri ing tears to other eyes in o places. In that case, there wa quite a crowd hunting for 'widower'.

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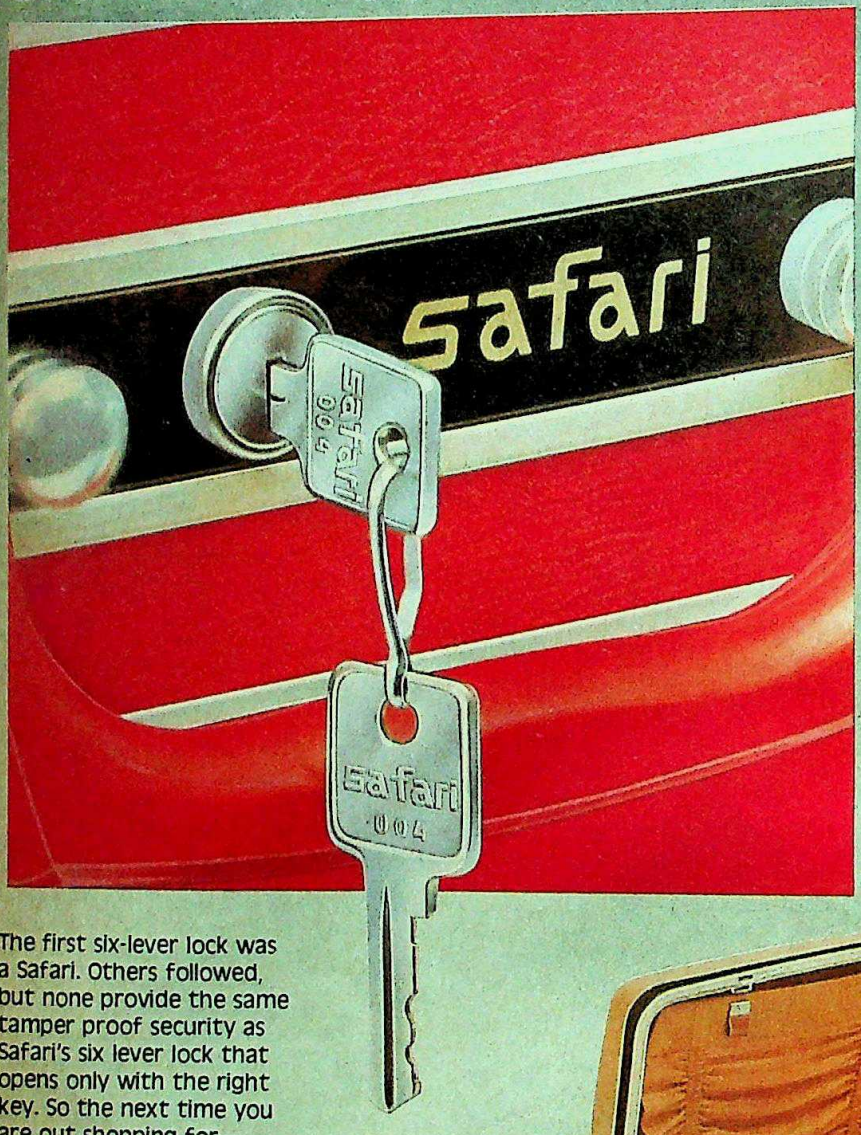

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BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY

Gilding An Image

ALL GOOD Hindus hope to reincarnate as better Hindus, and the *Bharatiya* Janata Party (BJP) will be celebrating its second birthday on April 5 with the conviction that it is well on the way to establishing itself as a "nationalist alternative". More than anything else, a strident section in the party is anxious to shed its old ideological and doctrinaire fat, and to convince people that it has changed a lot from the Bharatiya Jana Sangh.

The BJP is therefore trying to metamorphose into a coolly professional electoral organisation, and it has embarked on an ambitious three-pronged campaign to refurbish its image and 'modernize' its approach. Electorally, its strategy is to establish dominance over all other opposition parties, even in areas where the Jana Sangh never gained a foothold. It has launched a public relations blitz aimed at convincing both the public and a sceptical press that it is a high-profile party that considers activism its forte and secularism its credo. And organisationally, the BJP is overhauling its entire infrastructure.

Select Gathering: These changes were spelled out in documents given to participants at the party's first National Study Camp, held at Vrindavan, Mathura, from September 19-22 last year. Circulated among a select gathering of 200 delegates, the documents work out every component of the party's strategy for the future. They have only just now become available to the press, and provide a rare insight into the BJP's reorganisation plans. The central strategy document, written by an anonymous author, 'D.N.', homes in on the imperatives of electoral success—the corner-stone of the party's plans. "A myth was built up," says D.N., "that the only honest politician is one who does not seek power. This myth grew and it has reached a stage where many BJP politicians believe that renunciation is the only sure sign of sincerity."

INDIA TODAY has learnt that this keynote paper was prepared at the Deen Dayal Research Institute in Delhi, which has emerged as a sort of BJP ideological think-tank under the stewardship of former party general secretary Nanaji Deshmukh. Together, the Vrindavan papers read more like a management course's term-papers, and are very candid in their examinations of the party's internal dynamics—and weaknesses.

What is most significant is that the BJP has gone in for policy changes in key areas that previously helped its critics label it narrow-minded and parochial. For instance, it has adopted 'Gandhian Socialism' as its political philosophy. But its spokesmen are quick to point out that socialism does not mean the "faceless centralisation of a Communist-style regime". Says party President Atal Behari Vajpayee: "We are carrying on an intensive campaign to educate our workers and to tell them that there is no difference between this and the Integral Humanism that Deen Dayal Upadhyay formulated."

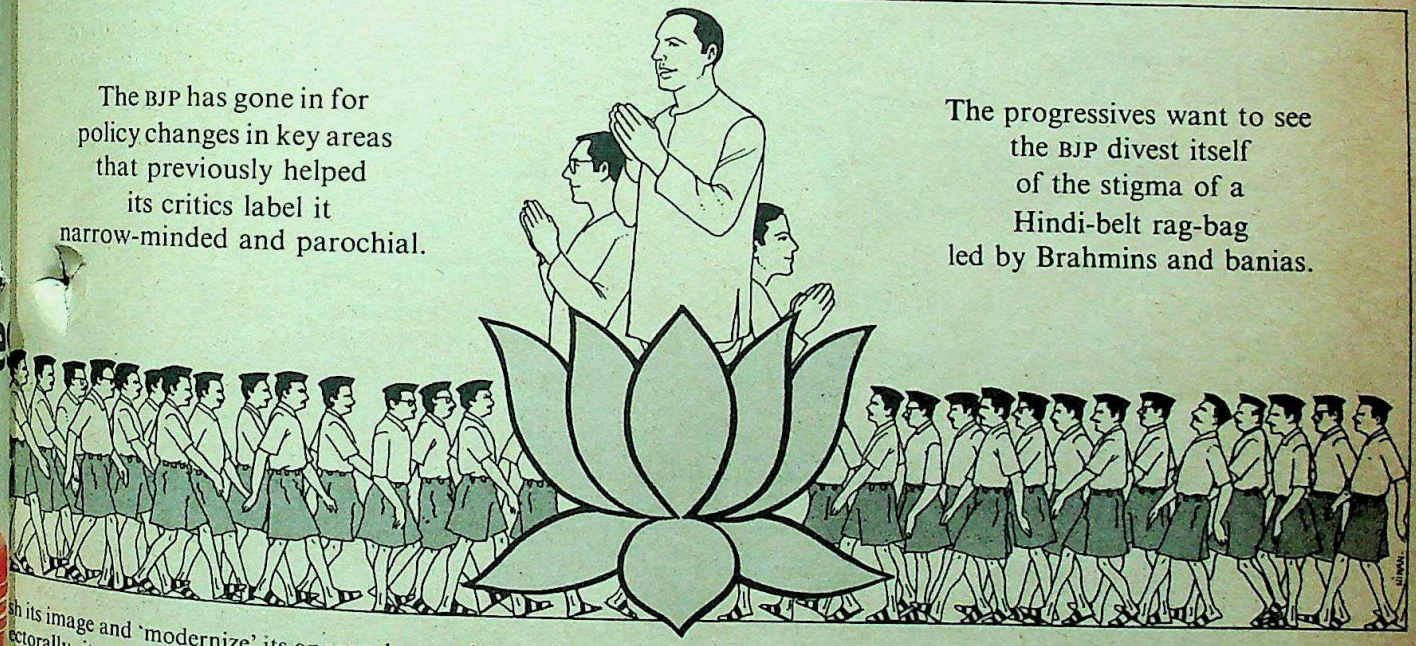
Surprising Shift: The second major shift is in foreign policy. The BJP, in its recent policy statements, has come out strongly in favour of friendship with Pakistan, and rapprochement with China. "You could say we sound almost pro-Pakistan," says Vice-President Ram Jethmalani. "But this is because of Atalji's influence. Our perceptions underwent a change when we were in power, for as foreign minister Atalji dealt with the Pakistan issue on a wider plane." This is surprising, because the Jana Sangh was, throughout its 25-year existence, vociferously anti-Pakistan. But partymen now hasten to clarify that the Jana Sangh was formed barely five years after Partition, when the wounds were still fresh.

The third major shift is on the question of nuclear weapons. "In our Jana Sangh days," says party Chief Whip in the Rajya Sabha Jagdish Prasad Mathur, "we were strongly in favour of India's possessing an atom bomb. Now we don't. Call it dilution of our policy, or compromise, or what you will." Jethmalani adds that the BJP has now realised the value of friendship with Pakistan and the fact that India's defence budget is "stunting economic progress".

There has been a change on the Kashmir question, too. Party ideologue Sunder Singh Bhandari says: "There was a time when we were agitating for the repeal of

The BJP has gone in for policy changes in key areas that previously helped its critics label it narrow-minded and parochial.

The progressives want to see the BJP divest itself of the stigma of a Hindi-belt rag-bag led by Brahmins and banias.



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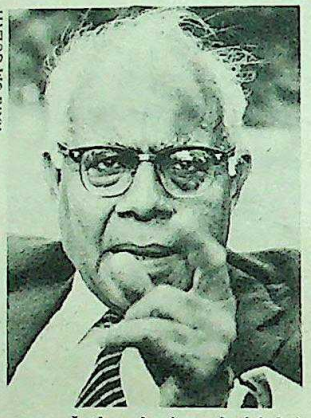
Article 370, which gives special status to Kashmir. Now we are not." There are few explanations for these major policy changes except for the argument that the BJP has "matured", but Jethmalani says: "I think it is the influence of the people who joined the BJP after 1980, and who were neither in the Jana Sangh nor the Rashtriya Swyamsewak Sangh (RSS)." Another leader says the BJP's framework of perceptions, except for its economic policy, are modelled primarily on the Janata Party manifesto of 1977.

Action Fronts: Many of the policies formulated at Vrindavan were endorsed by the party's National Executive when it met at Bhubaneswar from February 13 to 15, and action has already been launched on various fronts. Although the Jana Sangh had conducted similar study camps, their proceedings remained secret. The decision to give the press access to the Vrindavan papers came from Vajpayee. By last fortnight, the party had set up cells to handle propaganda and publicity, its anti-corruption drive, and the minorities. It is shortly going to set up an economic cell headed by Satish Agarwal, who is currently chairman of the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament.

But these changes cannot exert much impact unless the BJP convinces the country that it is in fact evolving. Its most important thrust, therefore, is in the field of propaganda. Mathur is in charge of this prestigious cell, and has enthusiastically set out to capture the hearts and minds of his countrymen. His Vrindavan paper spells out in painstaking detail the wooing of the Fourth Estate (*see box*). An integral part of the media blitz is the proposed launch of two fortnightlies, in English and Hindi, "to serve as documentation of party activity and ideological pronouncements". The Hindi magazine, says Mathur, should be out by April 15.

ALL this effort is aimed at projecting the party as the alternative to the Congress(I). Since its formation in 1980, the BJP has gained considerable leeway in Kerala, and is "successfully carving out a niche" for itself in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. "My meetings in the south are heavily attended," says Vajpayee. "Two years back this was unthinkable. But organisationally we are not strong in the south, we need to channelise people's enthusiasm."

Vajpayee expects the party to sweep Himachal Pradesh and do well in Haryana at the Assembly polls this summer and present a challenge to the Congress(I) in the 1985 general elections. Convinced that the BJP is the only disciplined and cadre-based party in the country apart from the CPI-M the Vrindavan strategy paper harangues party workers into positive vote-gathering attitudes. "We as an organisation suffer from mental blocks," it says. "Our workers have the makings of organisers and not activists."


HARI OM GULATI

PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

Jethmalani and (right) Gupta: pushing for change

Coupled with some very realistic assessments of other opposition parties, and the realisation that the BJP cannot hope to dislodge strong regional parties like the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam in Tamil Nadu, the Akali Dal in Punjab and the National Conference in Kashmir, is the cynical and cold-blooded decision to "channelise discontent prevailing in different sections so as to win their support, and to cut

From left to right: Advani, Bhandari and Mathur: the old guard

HARI OM GULATI

ATAL BEHARI VAJPAYEE

The Struggle Within

THE TROUBLE with Atal B. Vajpayee, 55, is that he is transparent. A rotund, dhoti-orator given to overheated rhe... Vajpayee's misfortune is that he hea... party consisting in large part of hard... adherents of the Rashtriya Swyamse... Sangh (RSS), and he cannot conceal... fact that the RSS bit chafes. Ever sinc... Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was fo... on April 5, 1980, ... payee, its president, ... been playing out a ... of wits with his ... ponents within the p... The battle will hav... winners or losers—... is the character of th... and the men who ... up its ranks. But its ... and lows have ... the party's facade ... solidarity.

Vajpayee's ... ences, particularly ... a powerful sec... leadership led by Ge... Secretary Lal Kri... Advani and Vice-Presidents Vijaya ... Scindia and S.S. Bhandari, surface ... almost predictable regularity. Last ... night he drew fire from his critics ... he told a meeting in Andhra Pra... Telengana region that his party ... prepared to cooperate with the C... ress(I) Government if it came out ... "viable programmes" for solving "... ing problems" like unemployment.

Opposing Renomination: If tha... dered on heresy, Vajpayee could ... have endeared himself to the BJP's ... core RSS files when the party wa... month finalising candidates for ... Sabha elections. Sources ... Vajpayee did not want Advani ... projected as an alternative leader ... party, to get a ticket. According to ... sources, Vajpayee opposed Advani's ... nomination for a third term on ... ground that Pitamber Das, a ... president of the Jana Sangh, was denied ... third term in the Rajya Sabha in ... Ultimately, of course, Advani did ... renomination, but the differences ... once again out in the open.

Vajpayee himself denies that a...

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separates him from other BJP leaders. "We are all like a family," he says, "and there is bound to be a little dissent in a democratic party. But we don't hush this up, and once a decision is reached by consensus, it is adhered to." Perhaps, but that is clearly much too convenient a way of explaining away the controversy which has dogged Vajpayee. Such as:

▶ At the party's first plenary session in December 1980, it took all of Vajpayee's persuasive powers to persuade Scindia to withdraw a memorandum she circulated opposing his proposal to adopt "Gandhian socialism".

▶ Nine months later, Advani and Vajpayee were on opposite sides of the fence when Vajpayee, advocating coalition government, admitted in a New York speech that no single party could form an alternative government in New Delhi. Advani and other hard liners believe it would be suicidal to try to make up with parties who in the past fought the party on the issue of "dual membership" of the BJP and RSS.

▶ At the BJP's national study camp for 200 select leaders at Vrindavan last year, Vajpayee's supporter Kanwarlal Gupta circulated a paper differing with Advani on the issue of cooperating with the Opposition.

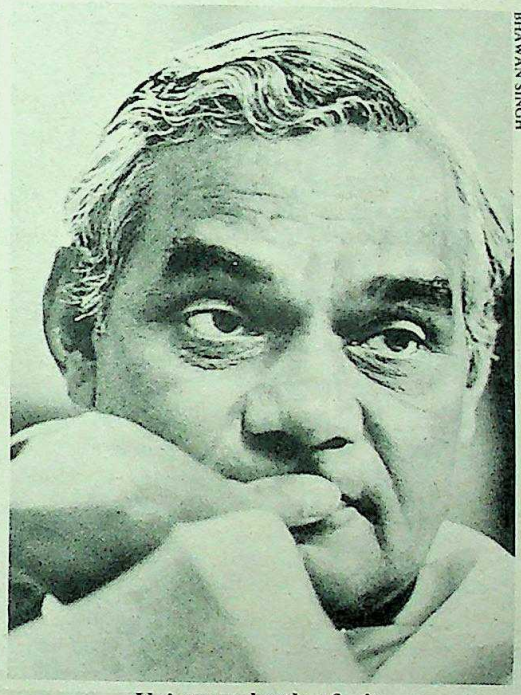
▶ After the Sadhupur massacre, Vajpayee went on a much publicised *padyatra* from Dehuli to Sadhupur, asking Lok Dal leader Charan Singh to join him.

▶ Vajpayee shocked his BJP colleagues last year by suspending Dina Nath Pandey, a Bihar MLA of the BJP, after he was indicted by the Jitendra Narain commission looking into the Jamshedpur riots of April 1979. The suspension was revoked against Vajpayee's wishes after a three-member investigating team led by Ram Jethmalani decided that the commission report was false and biased.

Vajpayee reports that he suspended Pandey "in order to respect the institution of enquiry commissions. I also wanted to signal to BJP workers that if they went astray they would be in for stern action."

Criticism: Vajpayee has erred, in his opponents' eyes, by not rejecting other opposition parties' unity moves outright. In December last year, he even allowed himself to be persuaded to host a dinner meeting with Lok Dal Chairman Charan Singh. At its last National Executive Committee meeting in Bhubaneswar on February 13, the party indirectly rebuked Vajpayee's proclivities by resolving to "retain its separate identity". It did favour "concerted action" by opposition parties inside and outside legislatures on specific issues, but went only so far as to endorse "electoral arrangements" with other parties.

Deep inside, however, Vajpayee resents the looming shadow of the RSS over the BJP. Privately, he has often argued that the BJP ought to have an independent political entity, with the RSS remaining discreetly in the background. His plight has been worsened by the animosity of two powerful men in the RSS leadership—Nanaji Deshmukh and Dattopant Thengadi. Deshmukh, who had himself



BHAWAN SINGH

Vajpayee: battle of wits

fallen briefly out of favour with RSS bosses last year over his manner of operation as chairman of the Deen Dayal Research Institute, is reportedly back in the good books, and was invited to the annual meeting of the RSS Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha in Nagpur last week.

Nor is the RSS overly pleased with the minor personality cult growing around Vajpayee. He is peerless in the party in his crowd-gathering abilities. The strategy document of the BJP discussed at Vrindavan waxes eloquent over "Atalji's personal magnetism," and calls him "a charismatic leader whose popularity cuts across party, community and regional limits." Of late Vajpayee's public meetings have attracted crowds in lakhs in such diverse parts of the country as Bangalore and Varanasi. Paradoxically, the hard liners in the party—to say nothing of the RSS—are not impressed. They would much rather see the BJP grow as a cadre-based outfit where the individual subserves ideology and organisation and not the other way around. In plain words, Vajpayee's public profile is too bold for their liking.

Yet Vajpayee's political survival depends totally on the BJP and its cadres. "That is why he will never quit the party," says a hard liner, "and will only make occasionally dissenting noises, much like the ineffectual rebellion of a Hindu wife against her tyrannical husband."

Stern Disapproval: These fissures in the BJP's leadership are nevertheless being viewed with stern disapproval by the chiefs of the RSS, more so because they are widening at a time when elections to at least half-a-dozen state Assemblies are in the offing. There is loud concern about the BJP's loss of ideological moorings. Critics in the RSS insist that after death of theoretician Deen Dayal Upadhyay, Vajpayee has frittered away much of the party's ideological base. The Vrindavan policy paper sums this up succinctly. "It must be admitted," it says, "that our principles and programmes do not generate high hopes. We have also suffered a setback on the ideological plane. The ideological temper which gave a sense of unity, a zeal to work, cohesion, commitment, devotion and sacrifice, we partly lost during the Janata period.

BJP propaganda chief Jagdish Prasad Mathur reinforces this prevailing feeling in the party when he says: "Advaniji and Bhandariji are the only leaders of stature in our party now who play the role that Deen Dayalji used to fulfill Vajpayee may not be in a position to do so—he may be a leader, but he cannot fill Deen Dayalji's shoes."

Currently, however, the BJP is riding a wave of optimism. Of the 12 Lok Sabha and 58 state Assembly by-elections it contested in 1980 and 1981, it won the prestigious Sagar Lok Sabha seat, and nine Assembly seats.

It is quite clear, therefore, that Vajpayee might dare to rock the BJP boat, but when the crunch comes he will never jump overboard. He cannot discard a system that gave birth to, and nurtured, his own political career. That is his predicament. —CHAITANYA KALBAG

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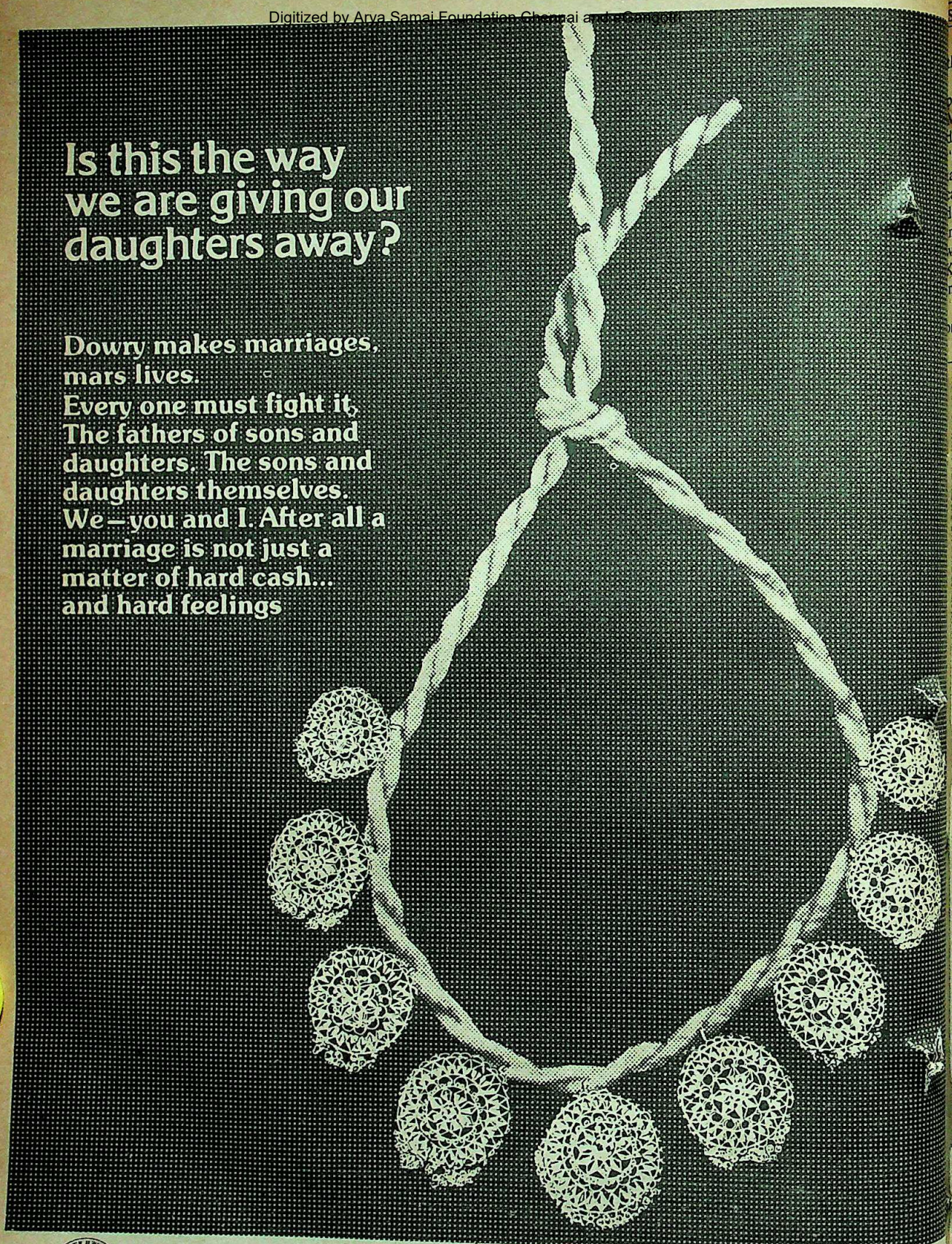

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them away from opponents".

Estimates: Specifically, the BJP is now projecting itself as "an alternative party" in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi, "number two" in Gujarat, "fast coming up" in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, "damaged" because of the Janata experiment in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, "a complementary force" in Haryana, Kashmir and Punjab, "blessed with a large fund of goodwill" in Assam and Kerala, but "not even a number three force" in West Bengal and Orissa.

"There are various indicators which prove beyond doubt that we are the rising force," the strategy paper says, and goes on to give a state-wise breakdown of the number of Lok Sabha seats it can fight today, and the number of candidates it can hope to put up by 1985. In what closely resembles a flight of fancy, the strategy paper says the BJP would win 195 Lok Sabha seats if an election were held now, and by 1985 be in a position to win as many as 243 seats.

The strategists do not mention that the BJP's present strength in the Lok Sabha is 15. This is in sharp contrast to the Jana Sangh's high-water mark in the 1967 general elections, when it polled 9.41 per cent of the votes and gained 35 Lok Sabha seats. In 1971 this dropped to 7.35 per cent and 22 seats. In 1980, the Janata (of which the Jana Sangh was still a constituent) polled 18.93 per cent of the votes.

Optimistic Claims: On this basis, the party projects its performance in 1985 at a percentage between 25 and 40. The strategists insist that "the ruling party is at best a stagnant party. The Left is confined in some areas and in their own struggles. The other forces are either under fear of total eclipse or striving for a mere existence".

The Assembly elections, therefore, will serve the BJP as an important dress rehearsal for the big fight for Central power 34 months

STRATEGY DOCUMENTS

Pearls Of Wisdom

THE Vrindavan papers make fascinating reading, especially for students of India's muddy political waters. Hectoring in tone at some places, cajoling at others, elucidating some point here or enunciating a point of dogma there, the papers make up a political primer that would qualify to rest on bookshelves alongside Muammar Qaddafi's Green Book and Mao Zedong's Red Book. Some excerpts from The Thoughts Of The Bharatiya Janata Party:

On itself:

We are the only national alternative. Only *our* programme and policies can save this country; only *our* leaders are tested and trusted, only *ours* is a nationwide party. We work only up to 25 per cent of our capacity. What is needed is skill and ability and not merely numbers; power-oriented single-mindedness and determination to save the country.

We have reached the stage where our meetings are just comparable to the stage-managed meetings of Mrs Gandhi. We have to adopt a mixed strategy of building the power structure from the grass roots or constituency level, supplemented by machinations at the top.

Our action, propaganda, organisation, politics, programmes, agitation, ideas, symbols—everything should work in conformity with consolidating the strength of a national imperative, its image and its atmosphere.

On other opposition parties:

Chandrajit Yadav, Jagjivan Ram and H.N. Bahuguna are individuals who style themselves as parties. They are poor imitations of Indira, as unscrupulous as she is but without any mass support.

The Janata Party too is a party of leaders only and it has no significant hold in any state, except to some extent in Gujarat.

The Lok Dal, of course, has four important state units, but backward class combination is waning.

There is besides us just one political group in the country—small in size and with a totally unacceptable ideology—who show adherence to political morality.

Extremist Naxalite groups are actively experimenting with (the concept of a watchdog body) in remote corners of the country. The response that they get is unbelievable. People see in them honesty and morality.

We are the only national alternative... We work only up to 25 per cent of our capacity. What is needed is skill and ability and not merely numbers; power-oriented single-mindedness and determination to save the country.

On propaganda:

Over 12 centuries ago a famous Latin (sic) philosopher, Lucretius, said: "Now then learn, how tenuous is the nature of an image."

Keep up-to-date information about every important journalist in the area and cultivate intimate relations with each one. Even those who happen to be pronouncedly hostile should not be neglected.

Sub-editors working at the desk are often left out of touch. They need to be assiduously cultivated.

A small cell should be set up at every press centre so as to utilise capabilities (of sympathetic journalists) by way of advice, collecting information and material. Existence of such a cell need not be made known to all and sundry.

If you... leak out a part of the total news and withhold the rest, it should be cleverly done to generate curiosity and heat in the press circles. The next instalment is likely to sell like hot cakes.

On foreign policy:

India has to view with concern (the arms that Pakistan will receive), more so in view of the regrettable history of our past experiences.

China's innate suspicion of Soviet intentions, its aspirations towards a global power status and the regrettable history of its border conflicts with us have now to be seen in the changed light of its commitment to 'modernize' and the reduction, by a quarter, of its defence spending.

On defence:

The BJP demands the institution of an in-house study with a view to modernizing our army.

While loath to commit India to a path of nuclear armament, the BJP reserves the right, however, to review this stand at any time in the light of changing world situations.

Recently a private survey conducted by a PR (public relations) individual of the Services shows that the party is liked by the Services for its discipline and that Atalji is the most popular leader in the eyes of the Services, next only to Mrs Gandhi.

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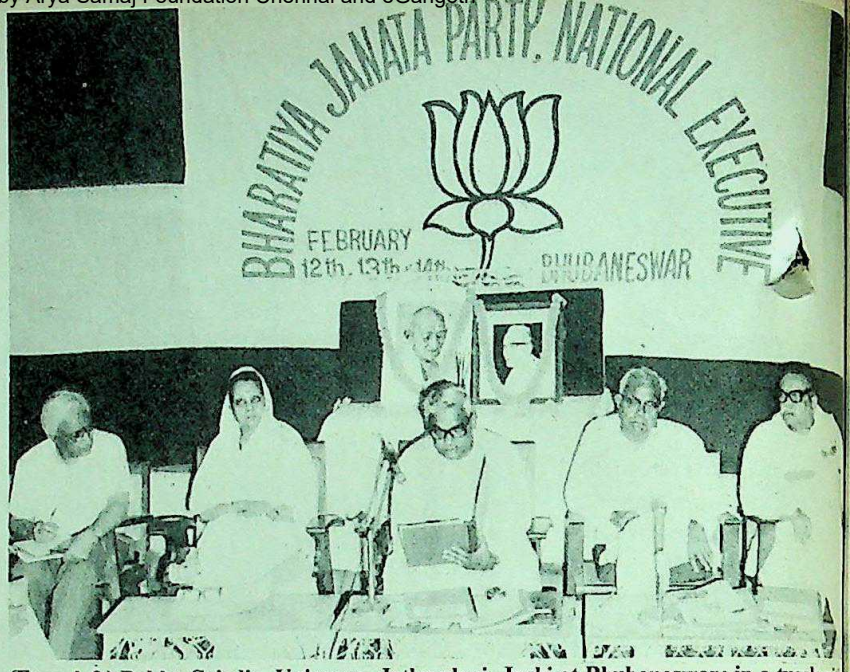

(From left) Bakht, Scindia, Vajpayee, Jethmalani, Joshi at Bhubaneswar: in a tussle with time hardliners, the progressives lose out

hence. Already, it has set up constituency-level task forces in the states going to the polls, and Madhya Pradesh leader and old Jana Sangh hand K.S. Thakre has been given charge of the crucial planning in Himachal Pradesh and Haryana. Workers' meetings are being organised at tehsil levels, and the selection of candidates has already begun.

All this planning has been infused with a sense of urgency, after the Bhubaneswar session categorically decided not to unite with other parties and to enter only into "electoral adjustments". Its higher councils also realise that the party has not performed as well in the Assembly elections in mid-1980 as its proponents make out. Of a total of 2,377 seats in 10 states, the BJP contested 1,427, but won only 148—and its candidates lost their security deposits in as many as 731 constituencies.

Janata Stigma: Bhandari has his own explanation for the 1980 performance. "We were branded as Janata people in those elections," he says, "and could not rid ourselves of that stigma." General Secretary Lal Krishna Advani says this stigma is a continuation of the problems faced by the Jana Sanghites in the Janata combine. "The Janata experiment," he says, "failed because the Jana Sangh constituent outstripped the others in its original strength. Immediately, therefore, the others raised the bogey of dual membership. This is why we are all the more resolutely opposed to unity."

It is becoming clearer, however, that the propulsion towards a change in the party's policies came mainly from a 'progressive' group, headed by Vajpayee and comprising mostly of post-Janata recruits. But group is engaged in a tussle with the old-hardliners (*see box*). The progressives' attempts at promoting unity with opposition parties were shot down once for all at Bhubaneswar, but not without acrimonious debate.

Vajpayee supporter Kanwarlal voices the progressives' viewpoint when says: "Minorities, labour, Harijans, and some extent farmers, do not support much. It is only middle class traders and intelligentsia who continue to be our supporters." The progressives are vehe about one point—they want to see the divest itself of the stigma of a Hindi rag-bag led by Brahmins and banias.

Slow Change: For the moment, at that is no easy task, nor one that can taken for granted. A second study circle planned for later this year, after the mer's Assembly elections, to take the p further. The effort has not been w success. The party has managed to ma a sheen of morality in a milieu where politician is seen to be venal.

Its strategy has been mapped out is being communicated in a new langu an idiom that is terse, confident and co porary. But the progressives are in a m ity. Ultimately, the BJP is not the ki party where change springs suddenly ploding outward and upsetting rhyth is more like a rheumatic chameleon moss-covered rock slowly trying to c its colour, seeking a grip on slippery gr for its journey onward.

—CHAITANYA K

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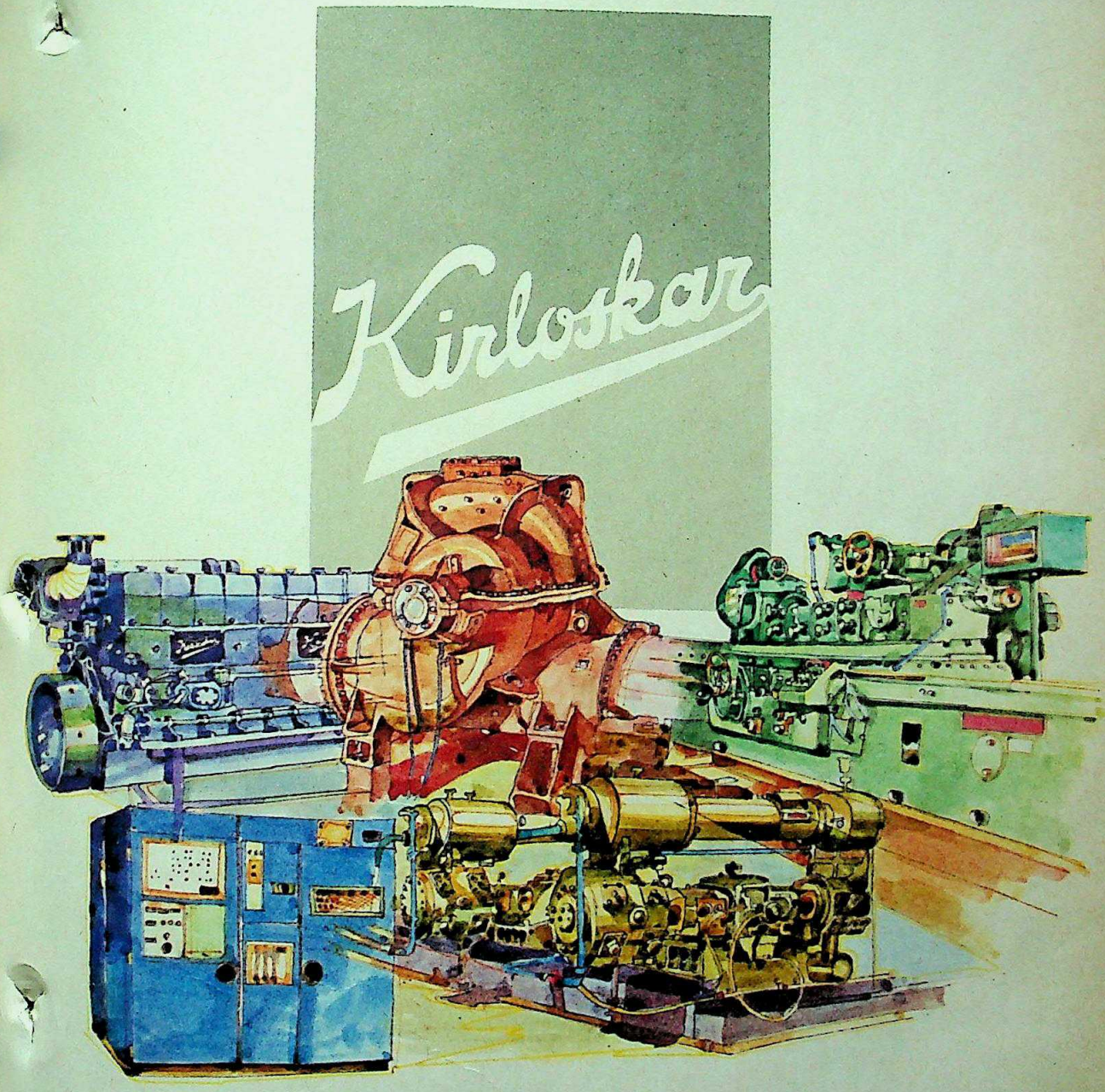

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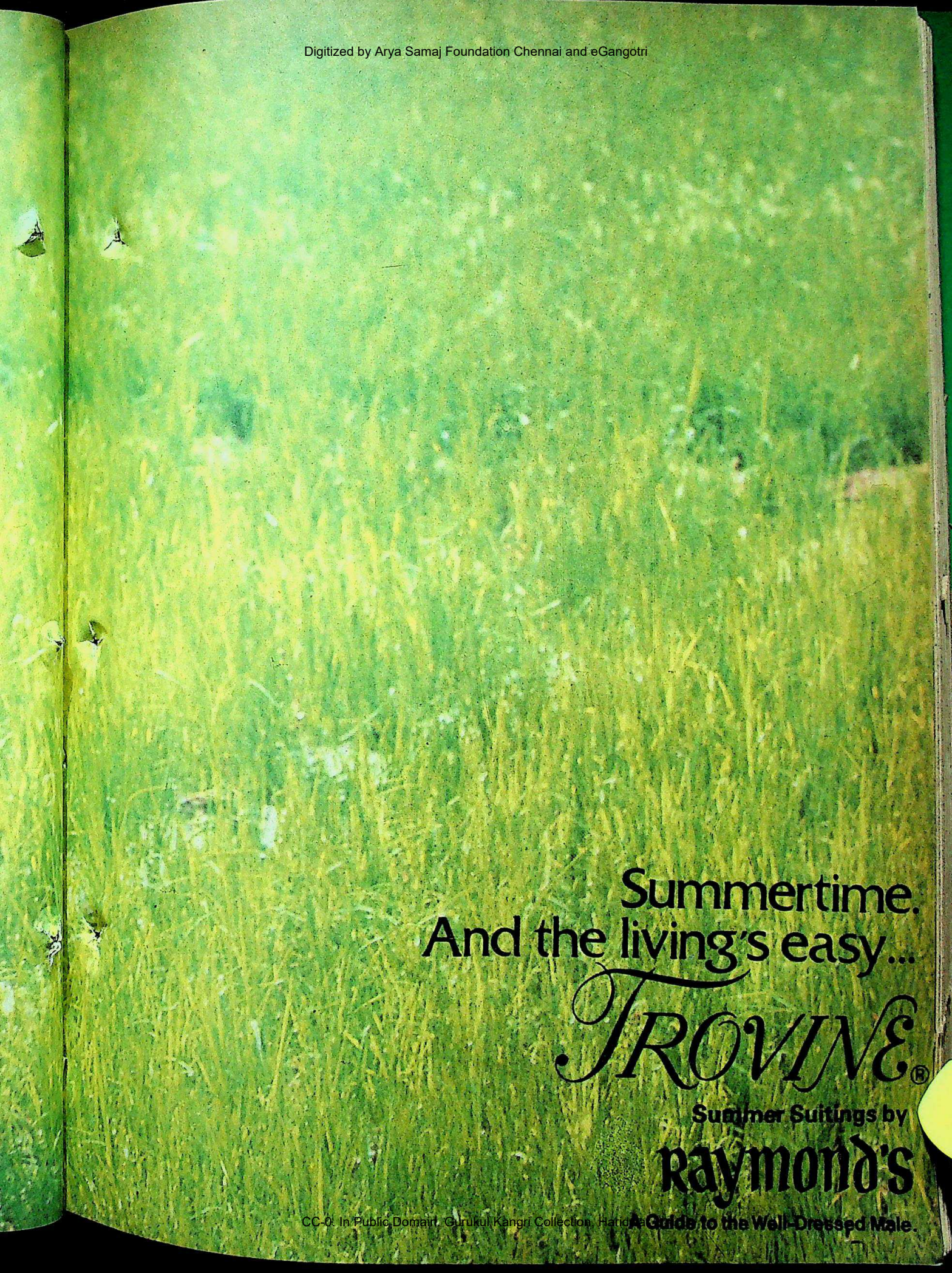

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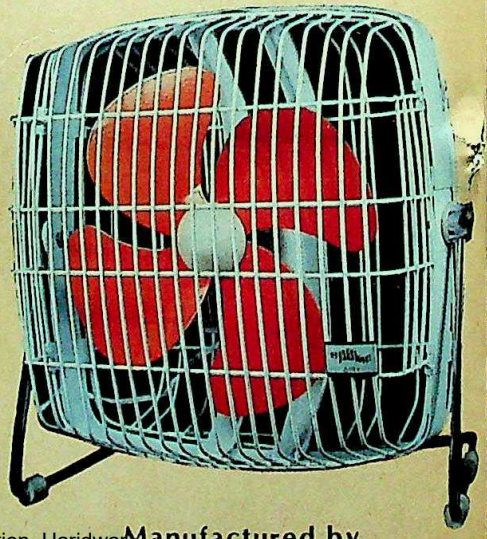

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HARTERS

Less Taxing Journeys

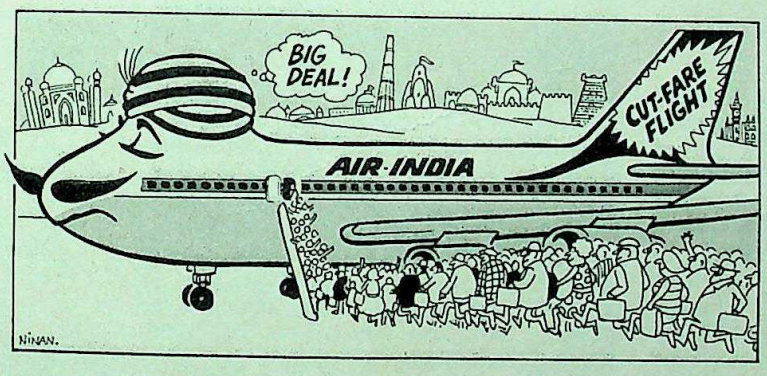
TWO ostensibly unrelated announcements in a space of 15 days made it clear that the Government was finally coming to terms with tourism, traditionally given the lowest priority in Indian planning. The first announcement, pertaining to the withdrawal of the controversial 15 per cent Hotel Receipts Tax (HRT) came at the tail-end of the Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee's budget speech. The second announcement proved a complete surprise, when Air-India declared that it would by the year-end introduce cut-fare charter flights to West European countries and possibly to Japan and South Korea. The change comes at a time when the severely flagging tourism industry—its growth rate has dropped from 16.8 per cent in 1978 to a miserable 4.9 per cent last year—requires a break.

Imposed last year, in a fabian attempt at curbing luxury consumption, the HRT was levied on any hotel which charged over Rs 75 for a single room, effectively covering every quality hotel in the country. The tax applied to every service offered by the hotel, and hoteliers around the country promptly upped the ante on everything from room tariffs to food and beverages. Added to individual luxury taxes imposed by many states, including Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir, the hike in hotel prices worked as an effective deterrent to the budget tourist from abroad.

Already heartened by the fiscal relief, delegates at the annual conference of the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) at Madras in mid-March were told of the charter plan by Air-India Commercial Manager, Captain M.S. Kohli who estimated that by September, Air-India would be able to begin charter flights from Milan, Turin, Madrid, Zurich and possibly even Japan and South Korea.

Risks: Air-India's argument against charters was that they would lead to lowered profitability: when an entire plane-load flies on a cut-rate charter fare, the yield per passenger is considerably lower than that obtained from a mix of first class, full-fare economy and concessional excursion passengers on the scheduled flights. An even greater deterrent was the fear that the unreliability of charter flights would lead to what is termed in airline jargon as a "diversion" of revenue—when passengers who would normally buy a high-yield ticket on a normal flight instead go in for a cheaper charter fare, depriving the airline of revenue. At a time when the airline was staggering along on marginal profits due to the oil price boom, it was in no position to risk its established markets with a shift towards charters.

With the growing pressure on the Tourism and Civil Aviation Ministry to deliver the goods, Air-India had no option but to drop its economic arguments and get down to the serious business of promoting tourism. Sri Lanka, only half the size of Tamil Nadu and possessing only a fraction of India's tourism resources, caters to over 4 lakh tourists annually, compared to India's 8.5 lakh. Thailand, not much better placed for tourist attractions, has nevertheless overtaken India in tourist traffic, and continues to grow rapidly. Both countries are served by regular charter services which bring in year-round, back-to-back package groups. Said M.K. Sanghvi, the diminutive managing director of Sanghvi Travels, who retired, last fortnight, as president of TAAI: "The advantage they have over us is the cheap charter fares. A package holiday to Colombo or Bangkok costs only a little more for a European than a holiday in Europe itself."



Travel agents and the hotel chains tend, not entirely without justification, to blame Air-India for the high price of India's charter packages. The projected Madrid-Delhi-Madrid charter flight by Air-India will cost each passenger $495 (Rs 4,455); the Amsterdam round trip will cost $478 (Rs 3,942). A British Airways charter from London to Hong Kong, almost one-and-a half times the distance, costs a mere $400 (Rs 3,600).

However, in fact, it is not only Air-India which threatens to push package prices over the realm of realistic competition. While the air fare accounts for roughly 40 per cent of a standard charter deal, hotels and ground handling account for anywhere from 45–50 per cent. And hotel tariffs in the country, in recent years, have shot up so high that they are only competitive with those in the most expensive cities in the world. Prominent hotel chains in Delhi and Bombay, the gateway cities, today cost as much as comparable hotels in Singapore, London, and even Tokyo. Resort hotels at beaches, with prices in the $20–30 (Rs 180–270) range, are at least $10 (Rs 90) more expensive than comparable hotels in Thailand or the Maldives. And the hotels of Agra, Jaipur and Udaipur (known as the golden triangle of Indian tourism), although they cost as much as their Sri Lankan counterparts, have few of the facilities offered across the Palk Strait.

Image Change: Possibly more crucial than the price of the Indian package is the fact that India is still not seen as a common man's holiday destination. Unlike Bangkok, which is visited as much for its massage parlours and shopping as for its tourist sights, India has traditionally been sold to westerners as a highbrow destination cluttered with historic sights and ancient culture. But this image, feel travel industrymen, is not what the average bus driver or bank clerk is looking for on his annual holiday. "They want a holiday which is fun," says Shashi Rege, Bombay branch manager for Sita Travels, "we have to create a holiday atmosphere of wine, women and song if we want to really cash in on the huge charter traffic of lower class travellers."

While that may be an illusory goal, and the parties to the charter debate recriminate with each other and continue to fight for a larger share of the cake, plans for the first charter flights are steadily being finalised. Air-India, last fortnight, drew up letters of intent for the purchase of three new Airbus craft, the first of which will be delivered by end-September. At least one of these is expected to be pressed into charter services, and part of the airline's ageing fleet of Boeing 707s will be used too. Since any country Air-India lifts charters from will demand reciprocal flying rights, the year-end should see Spain's Iberia and Avianco Airlines, Japan Airlines and a South Korean airline bringing in plane-loads of passengers too. Although the charters will initially concentrate only on Delhi and the golden triangle, since this region will have a huge excess room capacity after the Asiad, they are eventually expected to take passengers directly to resorts like Kashmir, Goa and Puri. All of which should provide a shot in the arm for Indian tourism.

—CHANDER UDAY SINGH

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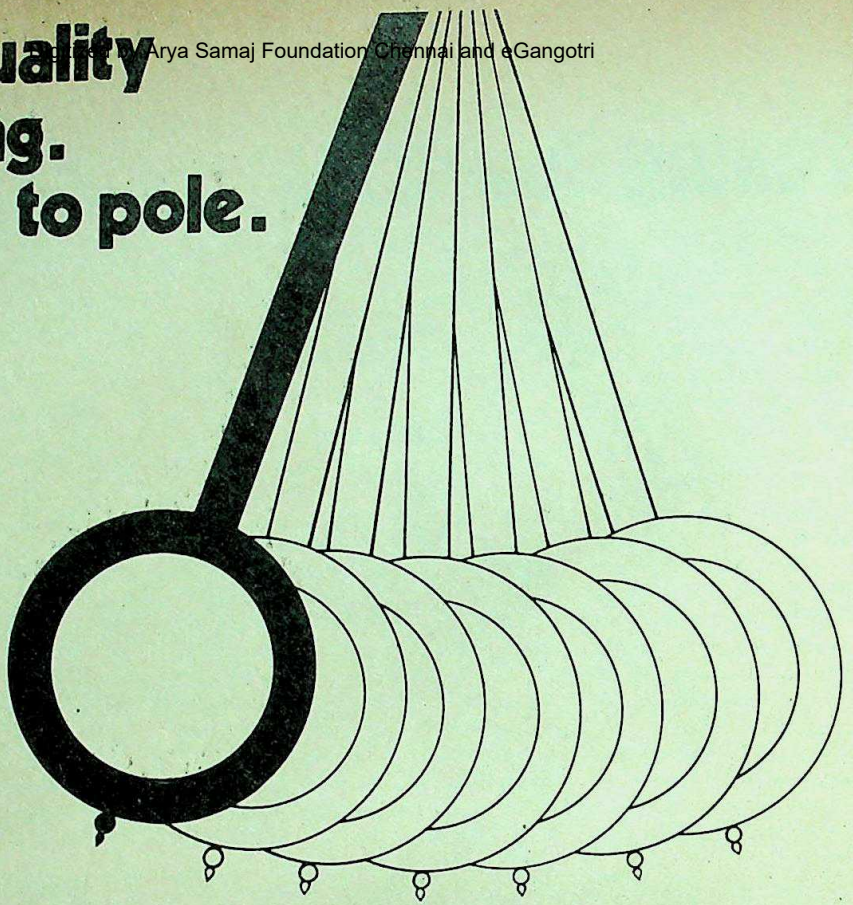

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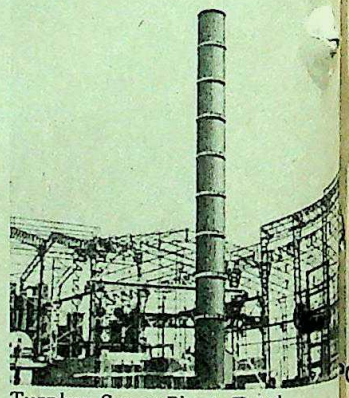

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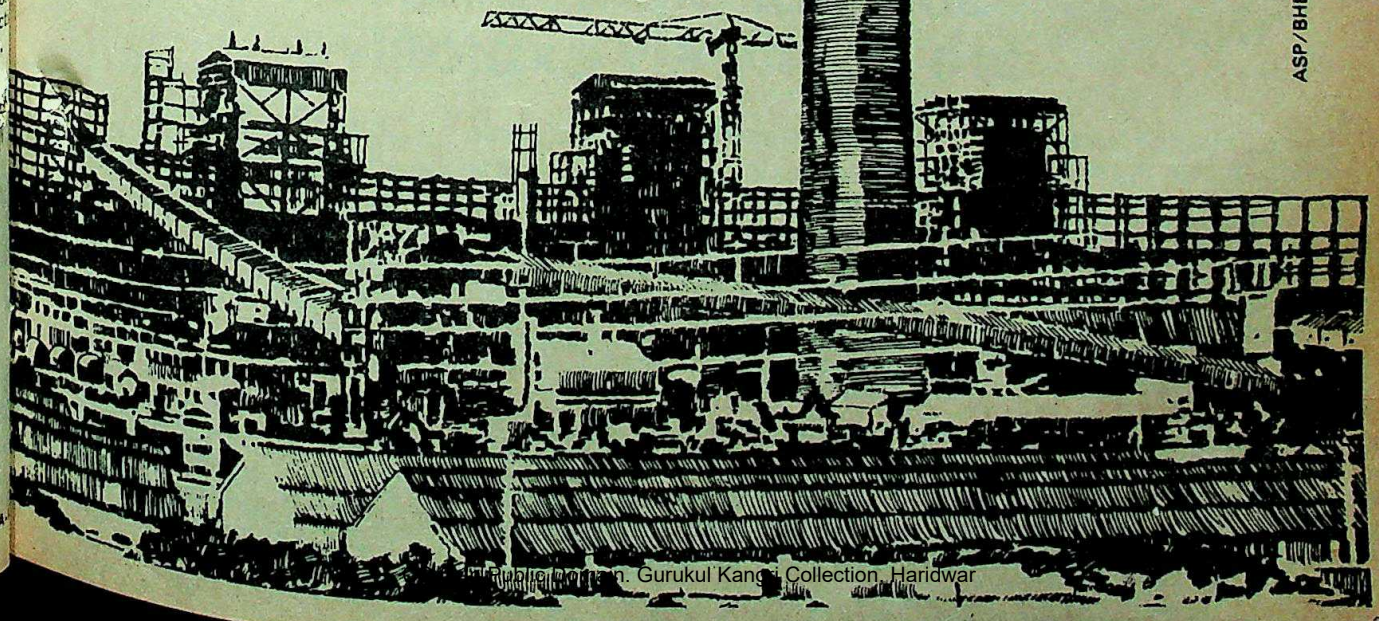

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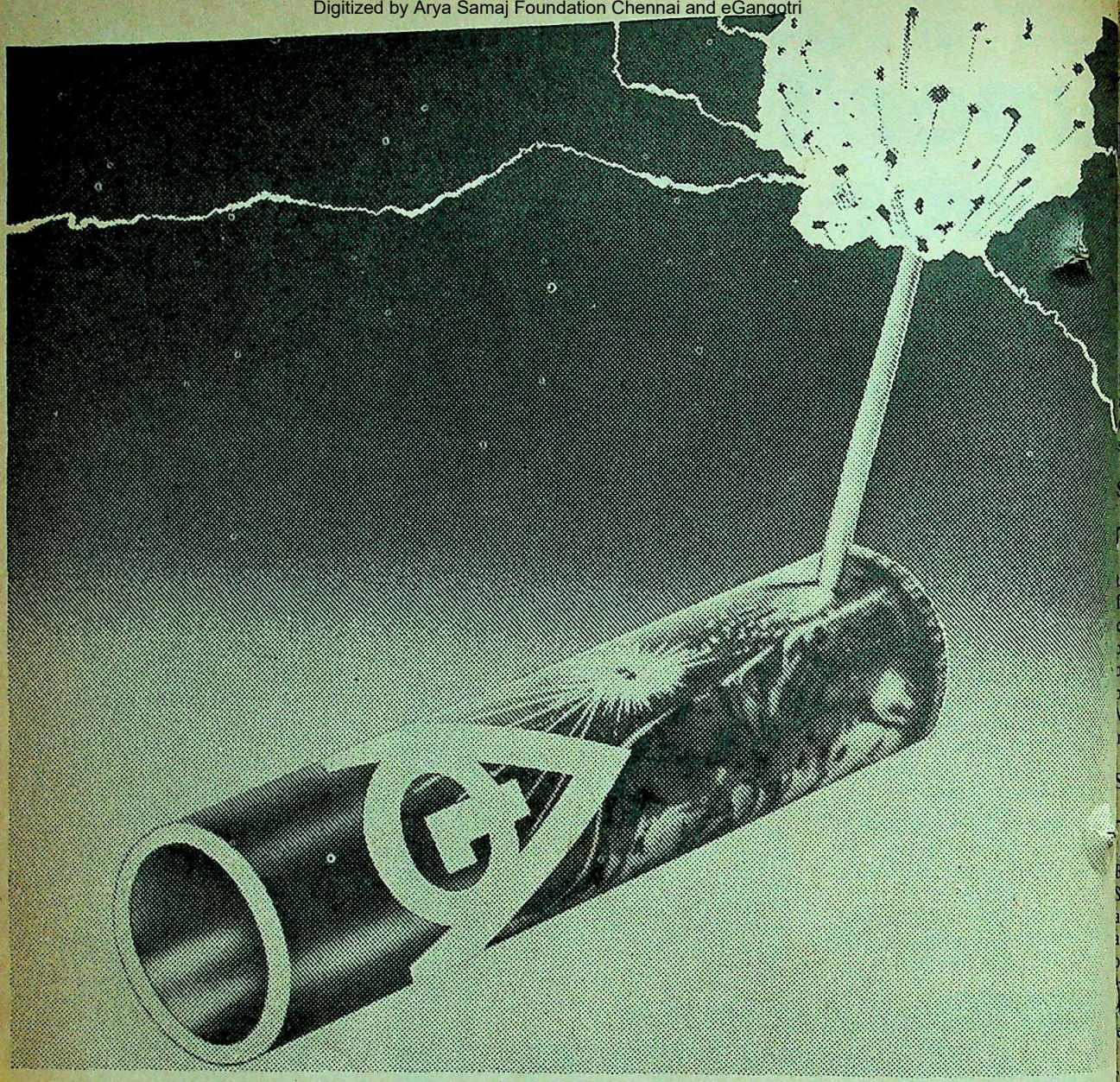

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THE CEMENT SCARE

ENTREPRENEURS who had planned to set up mini cement plants are having second thoughts following the virtual decontrol of the cement industry. According to the Directorate General of Technical Development, 54 units with a total capacity of slightly under 2 million tonnes have been registered but it is doubtful whether even a quarter of this capacity will now materialise. Most of the licensed units want to set up plants in areas where bigger plants are already operating, though, under the guidelines, they are permitted to come up only in hilly areas away from established transport networks. One company, Shriram Cement is, however, going ahead with its plans for a mini plant near Banaskantha, a backward area of Gujarat. The plant, costing about Rs 6.3 crore, will have an installed capacity of 200-tonne of cement a day, to be raised to pay 60 per cent after the installation of a pre-calcinator.

SOUTHERN COMFORT

TWO companies from the north are planning to set up caustic soda plants in the south. Texmaco, a Birla company in the K.K. Birla group, is setting up a new unit in Andhra Pradesh for the manufacture of caustic soda (33,000 tonnes a year), liquid chlorine (19,800 tonnes) and hydrogen chloride (19,800 tonnes). The project is estimated to cost about Rs 25 crore. Texmaco has been operating mainly in engineering lines but, apart from the above project, is also planning to take over Birla Cotton Mills of Delhi. Modis are also setting up a caustic soda unit in the south, possibly in Tamil Nadu, but details are not yet available.

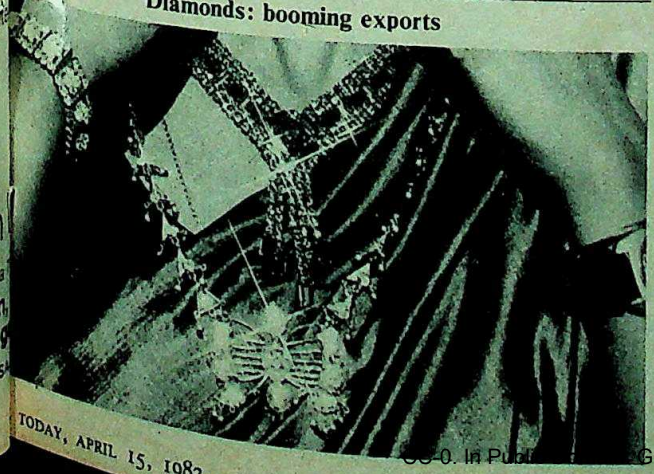
STEEL SWEDISH STYLE

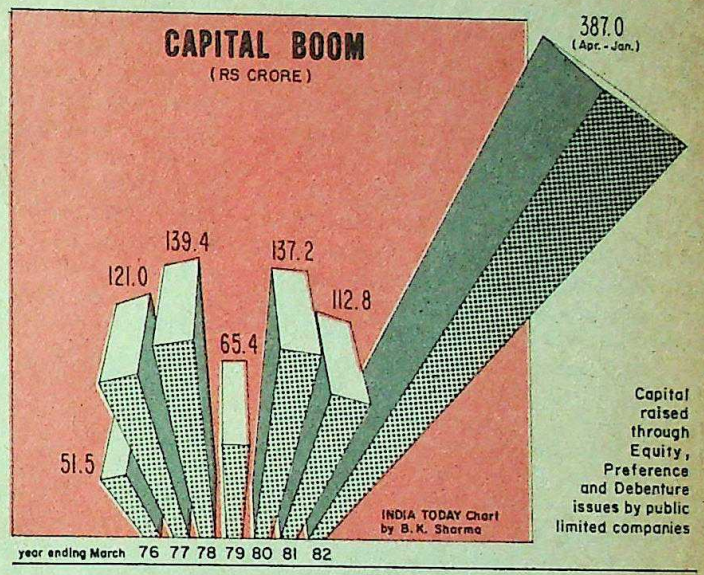
THE Goan Government has been sounding the Centre for a steel plant, or failing that, a sponge iron plant based on Bombay High gas. The plant is to use technology developed by Sweden, not yet tried in this country, the main attractions of which are that iron ore fines and powdered non-coking coal can be used as inputs. A pilot project is likely to be set up either at Hyderabad or Hospet. Meanwhile, Kudremukh project authorities are also examining possibilities for using the new Swedish technique for making steel using their iron concentrate for which there are as yet no buyers in sight.

EXPORTING THE GLITTER

DIAMOND exports have been booming and are expected to reach a record level of Rs 725 crore this year (1981–82) surpassing the 1977-78 peak of Rs 693 crore by a sizeable margin. The surprisingly buoyant export performance is due to the marked increase in the shipment of cut and polished diamonds and also due to a favourable shift in the world demand from large stones to small diamonds in which India specialises. The recent introduction of fancy shapes much in vogue is also a factor, along with the continuing disarray in the diamond cutting business in Israel, India's principal rival.

Diamonds: booming exports





CAPITAL HARVEST

PUBLIC limited companies will have raised capital worth more than Rs 450 crore during the year ended March 1982, making it a record year for capital business. Last year, total capital raised was Rs 112 crore, less than a quarter of this year's capital harvest. Roughly half the amount will be equity and the other half debentures; last year the equity: debenture ratio was 3 to 2. The best year so far was 1977 when the amount raised totalled Rs 139 crore.

COMING HOME

TATAS are setting up a small group in Pune, which in conjunction with Indian scientists working in the US and Europe will act as a think-tank for long-term technical planning in the country. The group works closely with the ministry of science and technology and will invite Indian scientists and technologists working abroad on consultancy assignments as well as general brain-storming sessions in India. Although the group's activities will be an independent operation, it is part of a general effort to persuade Indian scientists and engineers to continue their involvement with the country.

HUMAN BONDAGE

FINANCE Ministry officials are hopeful of collecting over Rs 500 crore through the new capital investment bonds introduced in the budget for 1982-83. The bonds are free of gift and other taxes up to a limit, and suggestions have been made that they should be exempt from death duties also. According to estimates prepared in the ministry, the bonds might bring in something like Rs 1,000 crore a year if this exemption is granted. Meanwhile, there are reports that bearer bonds are being sold at a discount in Bombay, a surprising comedown from the days when the premium was as much as 25 per cent and there were very few sellers.

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CREDIT

The Bottom Of The Barrel

IT WAS a day of long knives—and longer faces. Between noon and sunset on Thursday, March 18, the share markets took a nosedive and an estimated Rs 250 crore were wiped off the scrip values amidst the din of jobbers, as bear after bear took the floor in Dalal Street and Lyon Exchange to hammer the share prices to a frazzle. Eight market leaders—Tata Steel, Tata Engineering, Gwalior Rayon, Century, Associated Cement, Baroda Rayon, JK Synthetics and Delhi Cloth Mills—took a tumble and lost Rs 61.5 crore, Tata Steel and Tata Engineering, riding high even after the Pranab Mukherjee budget, suddenly buckling under the bear hammer and shedding Rs 33.6 crore between the two.

There are many who think that the worst is yet to come (see The Markets) though no one can say for certain why a market that had stood firm through two previous budgets and the worst inflation since the mid-1970s should give way so suddenly, as if hit by a meteorite. Every pundit has his theory but all, or nearly all, pointing to what is undoubtedly the worst cash crunch since the first Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) oil price blow. Money is so tight that the finance manager of a multinational company describes the deadly grip as "worse than that of a python".

Signs of recession are everywhere. The industrial growth rate which is said to have averaged 10 per cent this year up to over the comparable period last year was down to 4 per cent in December and there are reports of a further fall in January. According to a spokesman of the Association of Indian Engineering Industry (AIEI) most of their member units have reported that no fresh orders are being received. For orders already placed, finished goods are not being lifted and those who have accepted the goods are delaying payment. In Bombay, a city highly sensitive to the slightest fluctuations in the money market, bills have been outstanding for as long as six months, the situation being partly exacerbated by the textile strike which is said to have affected business to the tune of Rs 5 to 6 crore a week. The deadly combination of a labour strike involving over 250,000 workers in the city's leading industry and a tight credit squeeze has left a gaping hole in Bombay's economy, and when Bombay sneezes most of the country catches cold. "We are heading for a summer of discontent, if not worse," says a Delhi-based industrialist whose company supplies parts to Telco and Ashok Leyland and whose order book is getting a little thin on the top.

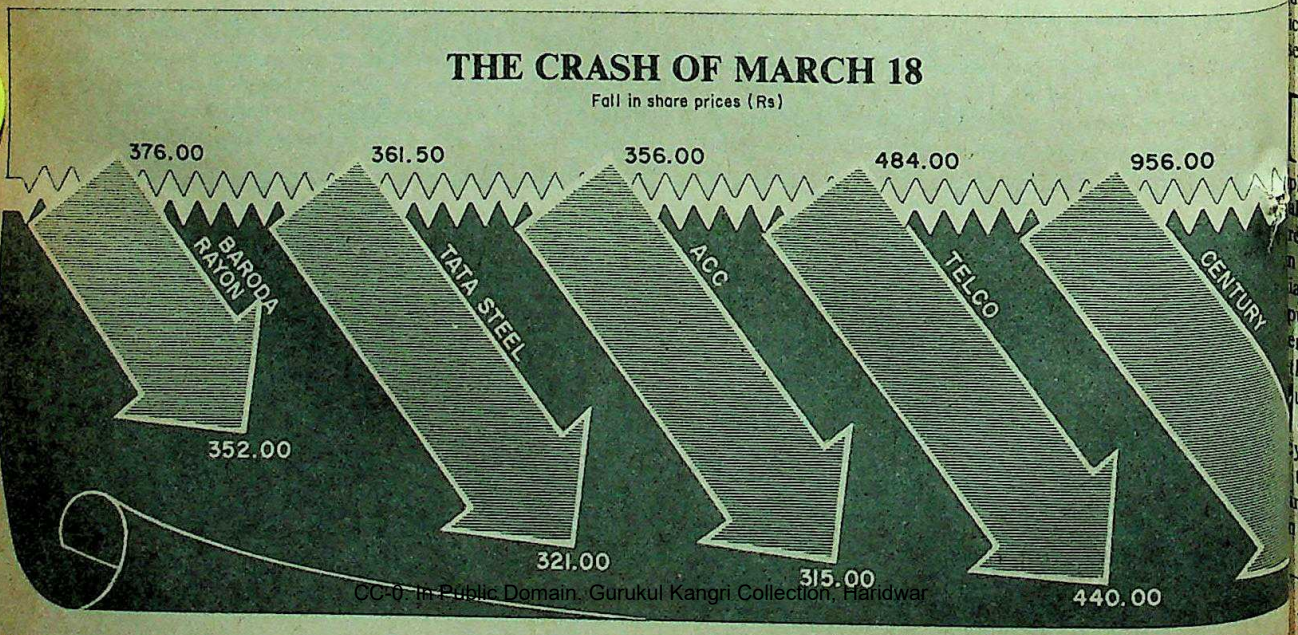
Credit Squeeze: Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee has admitted the credit squeeze but his officials do not believe that time has come for loosening the grip. "The only real solution for inflation is recession," says a ministry official. "Without credit squeeze and a tight grip on the money supply," he adds, "we could not have brought down the inflation rate from 20 to 3 per cent (on point to point basis) in two years. And we have done it without any loss in industrial output; in fact, we might end the year with the highest rate of industrial growth since 1976–77, second year of the Emergency, when it nearly touched 10 per

How has the money crunch surfaced? There are five main factors work:

- The Reserve Bank has raised the reserve ratio (CRR) and statutory liq ratio (SLR) of banks, and will have imp ed Rs 1,400 crore by end-April;
- Bank deposits in the current year (82) have not kept pace with expectation are lagging behind the target;
- A substantial proportion of b Bonds may have come from benam counts in banks and their withdraw affected bank deposits;
- There has been a fourfold rise amount raised by companies from th tal market by way of debentures and shares;
- Non-food credit from banks has sed sharply by 50 per cent and strain banks' depleted resourses.

The astonishing part is the slow of growth of bank deposits in the la of the current year. While during th half (April–September) deposits in by Rs 900 crore over the corresp figure last year, the growth in t quarter (October–December) has b gish, the total rise during the peri only Rs 1,936 crore against Rs 2,4 (during the same period) last year.

Where has all the money gone? A ing to V.N. Nadkarni, a banker. Bonds to the tune of Rs 600 cro subscribed for last year and the amo almost certainly come from benam accounts. There has also been an



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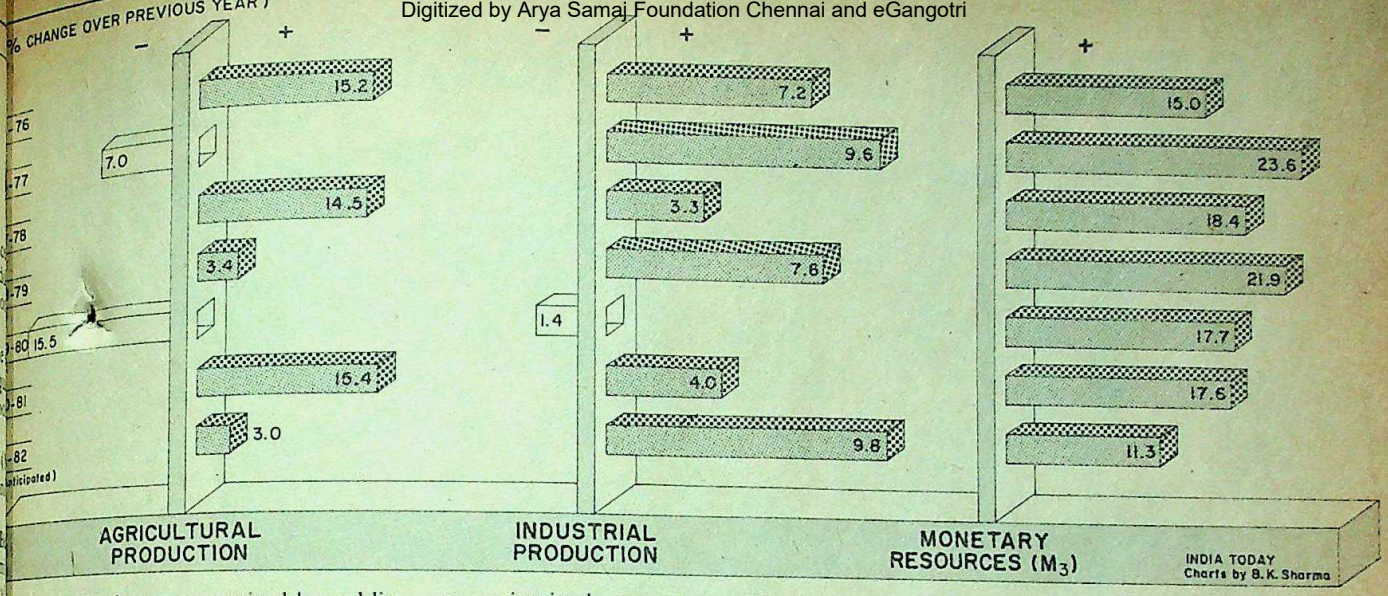

nted spurt in the amount raised by public nited companies from the capital market ough debentures and equity/preference ues (see Trade Winds). At one time, over 500 crore was said to have been locked debenture subscriptions which have raked nearly Rs 200 crore in the first 10 months the year.

Expansion: According to Nadkarni, hile there has been a substantial depletion banks' resources, their advances have own a runaway expansion. During the -called slack season (April–October 1981) n-food credit rose by Rs 1,924 crore as ainst an increase of Rs 1,280 crore during same season in the previous year. The serve Bank did try to warn the banks but ey were apparently on an 'advance' spree. e tightening of the CRR and SLR resulted the impounding of Rs 1,275 crore up to d-February and a further amount of Rs crore is expected to be impounded by il-end. The cumulative effect of all these of commission and omission, mainly the ner, has resulted in a big crunch which ds industry in a vice-like grip and from ch there can be little respite until the serve Bank nods its pretty head again.

THIS is not, however, the whole story. The tightening of cash is seen in the sharp reduction of the money ply growth rate from 17.6 per cent in 1981 to an estimated 11 per cent in the rent year. But there is also more to it n meets the eye. Industrial production in ia runs more or less in tandem with farm put, but not always so. Farm output ends less on New Delhi's monetary po- than the monsoon gods, while industrial uction is dependent, and severely so, on agriculture as well as the monetary y. It is possible to bring the industrial— trade—sector to a grinding halt by ng off the sluice valves of credit even there is a good harvest and food prices are maintained at a reasonable level. But the position becomes really desperate when, the growth of farm output is slowing down—even if not actually declining—and there is a credit squeeze, mainly to keep inflation in check. This is precisely what is happening this year.

For the past 10 years or so, there has rarely been an increase in industrial output without at the same time a rise in money supply. In 1976–77 farm output was down by 7 per cent (over the previous year) but industrial production rose by a record 9.6 per cent only because money supply was stepped up from 15 per cent to nearly 24 per cent (which incidentally led to prices shooting up by 12 per cent). In the following year, farm output more than recovered to an annual growth rate of 14.5 per cent but industrial production rate declined sharply to 3.3 per cent, almost certainly as a direct consequence of a credit squeeze that brought down money supply rate from 24 per cent to 18 per cent.

The same thing happened last year when again there was a record growth rate in farm output (15.4 per cent) but industrial production was held more or less at bay around 4 per cent, as money supply was also held in check. This year, there has been only a nominal increase in agricultural production (around 3 per cent) but industrial output has been stepped up by nearly 9 per cent, though most of it may have to be stockpiled as money supply has been reduced drastically from 17.6 to 11.3 per cent. If the squeeze continues, the industrial growth rate next year will almost certainly be trimmed to 3 to 4 per cent, if not lower, unless agricultural production picks up substantially, which seems unlikely.

The coming crunch is therefore much more fundamental in character and is only partly related to the manipulation in money supply. Businessmen who are asking for relief from credit squeeze in the hope that this would help restore the health of industry are doing the natural thing, without realising that, without substantial increases in agricultural output, a bigger flow of credit would only push up prices and give a nasty twist to the inflationary spiral. It is true that inflation does not really worry industry much for, provided it is moderate, it is not such a bad thing for sales and profits. The wholesale price index has gone up by more than 40 per cent over the last three years and so have the profits. The rosy tint on the cheeks of the corporate sector is largely a cosmetic effect of inflation. The Tata Steel share which featured so prominently in the crash of March 18, went up nearly fourfold last year (from less than Rs 100 to nearly Rs 400) mainly as a result of price decontrol, albeit partial. The same was the case with Premier Automobiles and other companies which have gained tremendously from price decontrol and inflation.

Bodies like the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) which asked for a high deficit in the budget—FICCI has argued that an 'ideal' deficit could be Rs 2,850 crore, more than double the figure in Pranab Mukherjee's budget—are, to put it mildly, being extremely short-sighted. In the conditions of near-stagnation in farm output, a deficit of that size may be good for industrial profits but in the long run would play havoc with the economy. The credit squeeze is thus a symptom rather than the cause of the present disarray in the business sector. The real cause is the virtual stagnation in the growth of the farm sector and, unless that is tackled first, fiddling with credits and advances might help in the short run but would almost certainly be counter-productive over the longer haul. Pranab Mukherjee may have disappointed his business friends by opting for a relatively low deficit but he is obviously waiting for better news from the farmers before turning on the juice. —JAY DUBASHI

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EXTILES

Threadbare Existence

THE century-old textile industry in Gujarat is in a grave crisis. Unusual consumer resistance to high prices in the last few months has resulted in piling up stocks, and discount sales have not helped. Sales are at an all-time low, and the mills that are hardest hit are those manufacturing cheap cotton and blended fabrics, indicating that people at the bottom of the income spectrum are buying less and less cloth.

The Ahmedabad Textile Mills Association (ATMA) recently surveyed 19 out of the 58 mills in the city, and came up with alarming figures. Between January and September 1980, the 19 mills made a gross profit of Rs 536 lakh; between January and September 1981, profits slumped to Rs 15 lakh. Says ATMA President Ajaybhai Himanbhai: "Textile prices have risen by only 8 per cent in the last three years, but production costs have shot up by 29 per cent. If we pass it on to the consumer, he will just not buy and so we have to stomach huge losses."

Sick Mills: A steep rise in prices of raw materials, escalating power costs, wage hikes and high interest rates have combined to make life miserable for the mills. Cotton prices alone have shot up by 50 to 80 per cent. In fact, there are fears that a number of cotton mills in the country will have to down shutters, following in the wake of the 48 nation-wide casualties of the last two years. Says Praful Anubhai, chairman, Rustom Mills: "The industry can get back on its feet only if the Government rushes financial relief immediately."

With the prevailing credit squeeze, that is not very likely. The Reserve Bank of India has directed nationalised banks in early January to cut down on loans to business houses. Last Diwali, the banks had granted loans to textile mills to disburse bonus payments—the first time such a thing had happened. The workers, who number over three lakh in Gujarat, are understandably worried. Says Arvind Buch, president of the two-lakh strong Textile Labour Association: "Workers are upset as they fear the recession may worsen and throw them out of jobs as mills cut down shifts or close."

Four of Ahmedabad's mills have closed down and six are on the verge of doing so. The latest to down shutters was Bhalakia Mills in mid-March, and 2,500 workers lost their jobs. In all, over 10,000 workers have been affected by the closures. The National Textile Corporation (NTC), a government body which has taken over a number of sick mills, does not plan to take over any more because it is already running at a tremendous loss.

One long-term solution for the sick mills is modernization. Polyester fabrics are increasingly becoming popular, because of their durability and appearance. In 1965 the per capita usage of cotton cloth was 14.72m as against 1.73m for blended fabrics. In 1979, the figures were 10.25m and 5m respectively. Use of polyester yarn has increased from 14,000 tonnes to 40,000 tonnes in the last three years.

Trapped: Modernization is not easy however. Starting in 1979, some mills attempted to replace their worn-out machinery but the recession caught them on the wrong foot. Repayment schedules have to be met, and these mills are unable to do so at the moment. At present, replacing old with new will become virtually impossible, what with banks drawing their purse-strings tight. One sign that the situation borders on the hopeless is the fact that Ahmedabad's 6,000 cloth merchants of two years ago have dwindled to around 5,000.

Workers outside Bhalakia Mill: apprehension

For the moment, there is a silver lining: the ten-week-old textile workers' strike in Bombay has led to a slight improvement in sales since mid-March. This, unfortunately, is only the proverbial straw, for the crisis runs deep. An executive of a leading mill in the city puts it succinctly when he says: "The sad state of the industry is partly because of inadequate research and development activity." The textile mills cornered vast profits in the last few decades, but little attempt was made to pump in money for its growth. The year of reckoning has come.

—RAMESH MENON

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TAFCO

Down At The Heel

IS IT possible to lose one rupee for every rupee worth of sales? One organisation that shows the way is the 50-year-old Tannery And Footwear Corporation (TAFCO) of Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh. The 400-acre industrial complex on the banks of the Gomti is owned by the Central Government and wallowed in the red to the tune of Rs 4 crore on Rs 4 crore of sales last year, raising accumulated losses to over Rs 20 crore in less than a decade. Asia's largest leather complex is in deep trouble.

Obsolete machinery, frequent changes at the executive level, trade union rivalry and rampant corruption have combined to produce a sick corporation. Capacity utilisation is only about 60 per cent and the aging machinery runs just eight hours a day. Admits TAFCO Chairman Raja Harindra Singh: "TAFCO was handed over to the Central Government after every one of its owners (the British, the Mundhras and the Bajorias) had fully exploited it, leaving only the scrap. Because of the continual sickness, a vicious work culture has taken over the working force."

TAFCO came into being in 1969, when the Government used the provisions of the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act to thwart leading shoe manufacturer Bata in its bid to take over Cooper Allen and Northwest Tanneries, owned by the British India Corporation Ltd. The Central Government took charge after paying Re 1 as compensation. Says a senior official of the Industry Ministry: "We had two objectives: to save the jobs of the workers and to exploit fully its market potential by pumping in enough money so that it could emerge as a competitor for Bata."

Unstable Management: The first of these objectives has been fulfilled, none of the workers losing his job—over 70 per cent are Scheduled Caste and Muslim. But TAFCO has not become a viable commercial organisation. Its footwear, marketed under the brand name Flex, has yet to make its presence felt in shoe stores; on the other hand, Bata's turnover has increased by over 80 per cent since 1970. A trade union leader charges: "The major hindrance to TAFCO's growth is unstable management. The Central Government has also not fulfilled its promise of providing enough capital to replace the 100-year-old machines."

The corporation has had as many as 11 managing directors in the last 12 years. Between 1975 and 1979 it had no permanent chief executive. Consequently, 30 senior-level vacancies in the finance, budget and quality control departments were unfilled and capacity utilisation plummeted to less than 40 per cent by the end of 1979. The Public Accounts Committee in its report on

Singh: hard line on labour

TAFCO for 1980-81 took serious objection to the frequent managerial changes. At present, there is a relatively stable administration but attempts to destabilise the chairman and other senior officials continue.

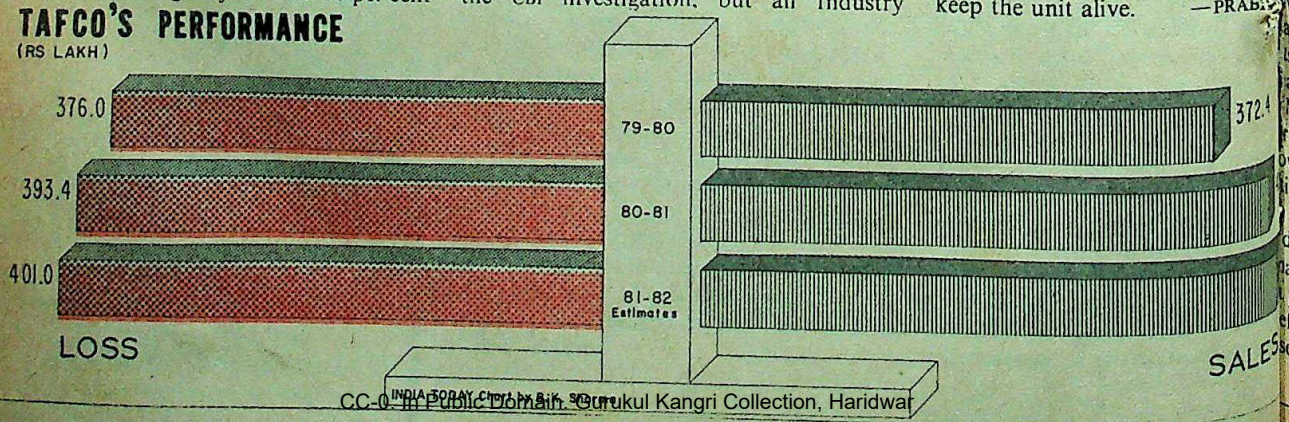
Curiously, the Central Government may even be conniving at this. For example, the seven-member board of directors has been packed with Singh's opponents. Even anonymous complaints against him have been referred to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), and last month he was asked to explain his role in alleged financial irregularities. Singh refused to comment on the CBI investigation, but an Industry Ministry source revealed that the ch... ruthless handling of TAFCO's 17 unio... 2,700 workers—is the real reason ... campaign against him. Some of the ... were created with Singh's backing.

Corruption: Last year Singh ... over 10 officials after corruption ... relating to the purchase departme... faced. An internal inquiry ... some officials had embezzled ... by paying too much to suppliers ... rough pilferage of stocks. Soon a... dismissals, Singh was physically att... Kanpur and has since been under ... to reinstate the dismissed em... Moreover, two Congress(I) leaders ... get him to give their protégés im... posts in TAFCO. Singh's strong-wi... tude on labour has paid off in one wa... was not a single strike in 1981.

Further deterioration in TAFCO ... was caused by the delay in releasing ... replace obsolete machinery. The ... Government had given only Rs 1.15 ... the promised Rs 4 crore by the ... 1980-81. The old machines, some ... installed as long ago as 1940, have ... cope and the percentage of machine ... down has gone up from an already ... per cent in 1978 to over 70 per cent ... Says a TAFCO production executive ... shops in Agra have better equipm... machines for leather processing ... have here in a multi-crore factory."

TAFCO has shown some imp... after Singh's induction in May ... chairman, who is related to the form... family of Patiala, claims that d... tenure production has risen by ov... cent. The output of defence foot... bark leather rose by over 70 and 25 ... respectively in the last two ye... management expects better result... next three years. Argues Singh: "... compete with any major private se... if our outstanding loans are conve... equity and a five-year moratorium ... posed on interest payments." That ... be possible, but TAFCO is sure of ... more transfusions of money becaus... executive put it, it is politically exp... keep the unit alive. —PRAB...

TAFCO'S PERFORMANCE
(RS LAKH)



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CISE DUTY

More Slaps Than Sops

PRANAB MUKHERJEE's first budget, at first glance so redolent of status quo, is peppered with little booby traps. Two paragraphs in his speech have caused heartburn amidst tyre manufacturers—who are dismayed about a stiff excise hike—and soft drink bottlers, who are cut up because Mukherjee has clacked down on soft drink franchises' excise exemptions.

The finance minister cut back duty on synthetic rubber, carbon black and rubber processing chemicals, all needed for the production of tyres, but he also raised duty on finished tyres to 66 per cent from 60.5 per cent *ad valorem* and on processed tyre cord to 17.5 per cent from 5.5 per cent.

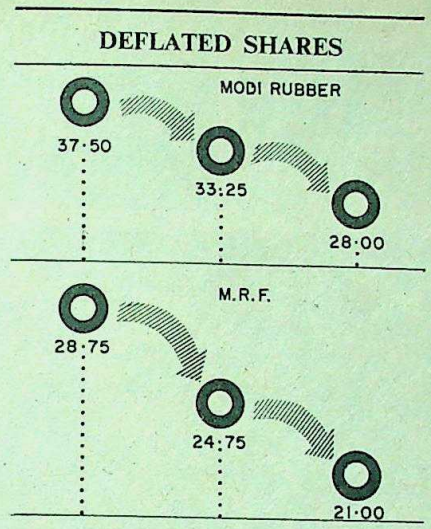
What this sop-cum-slap does to just one very popular truck tyre—the 900-20 16 PR, which costs Rs 2,000 ex-factory—is typical. The duty reliefs save Rs 36.26 but the additional levies come to Rs 125.08. The increased payment to the Government is Rs 89.42, which is 4.4 per cent of the tyre's basic price. Not that the manufacturers are headed for the poor-house; they promptly raised prices of truck and three-wheeler tyres by 5 per cent, and of all others by 3.5 per cent.

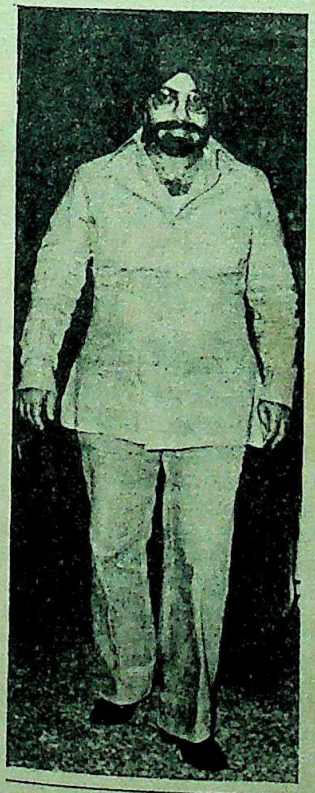
Special Burden: Manufacturers are especially furious because part of the earlier 60.5 per cent excise duty was a 'special excise duty' of 10 per cent which had been upheld by the courts. The increase of 20 per cent is therefore a 20 per cent rise on the basic rate of 55 per cent. The manufacturers are using the money collected for this held back special excise duty to ease their tight liquidity position. But if the appeal is vacated, and the special duty has to be paid with retrospective effect, tyre makers will be landed with massive payments at a time when their performance is at an all-time low.

Mukherjee also made two other amendments. The first resolves the ambiguity on calculation of assessable value of tyres for excise duty—a long-standing dispute—and demands that manufacturers make up their short payments with retrospective effect from October 1975. The second amendment relates to the manufacturers' claim that no excise could be levied on in-process tyre cord since it was not removed from the process line. Now tyre cord is subject to excise duty whether it is removed from the process line or not.

Naturally, the manufacturers are not feeling kindly towards Mukherjee. They grumble that the percentage of their net profits to sales is an abysmally low 1.4 per cent, whereas that of raw material manufacturers is as high as 5.4 per cent. Says V. Narayanan, managing director of Goodyear: "Even if the courts decide in our favour and our profits soar, we will still be losers—the Government will rake in a tax of 73.5 per cent on the profits."

The manufacturers' woes were reflected in the beating their shares took in the market after the budget. Industry whiz-kid Modi Rubber Ltd suffered the most, dropping from Rs 33.25 to Rs 28 in just 18 days. Shares might plummet further if the manufacturers are forced to pay the Government the excess excise duty they had held back.





What is puzzling observers is that Mukherjee plugged the soft drinks loophole at all, since it hits directly at Charanjit Singh, a party colleague in the Lok Sabha. Speculation is rife about whether Singh's supposedly high-placed friends in the power-centre are indeed his friends, because he apparently had no inkling at all of the approaching crunch.

MANY soft drink bottlers are discovering that happiness is as effervescent as the fizz in their beverages. The Government had exempted small bottlers with turnovers below Rs 7.5 lakh a year from excise duty. Large manufacturers in the cities often set up smaller plants in lesser towns under franchise agreements. Four soft drink brands—the Pure Drinks' Campa range, the Jaipurias' Vibhu range, the Pais' Baajal range and Parle's —had taken advantage of this provision to set up region-wide franchise agreements with small bottlers.

Now, Mukherjee appears to have been advised that there was "misuse of the scheme with a view to avoiding excise duty on popular brands of aerated waters". He devised an anti-avoidance measure under which small manufacturers "who sell their products under brand or trade names in pursuance of agreements with the owners of such brand or trade names would not be eligible for the concession". A notification issued on February 28 clarified that the exemption would not apply "if the aggregate value of clearances of all such aerated waters bearing the same trade mark or brand name from all such factories taken together had exceeded Rs 15 lakh during the preceding financial year".

Franchise Deals: Franchise

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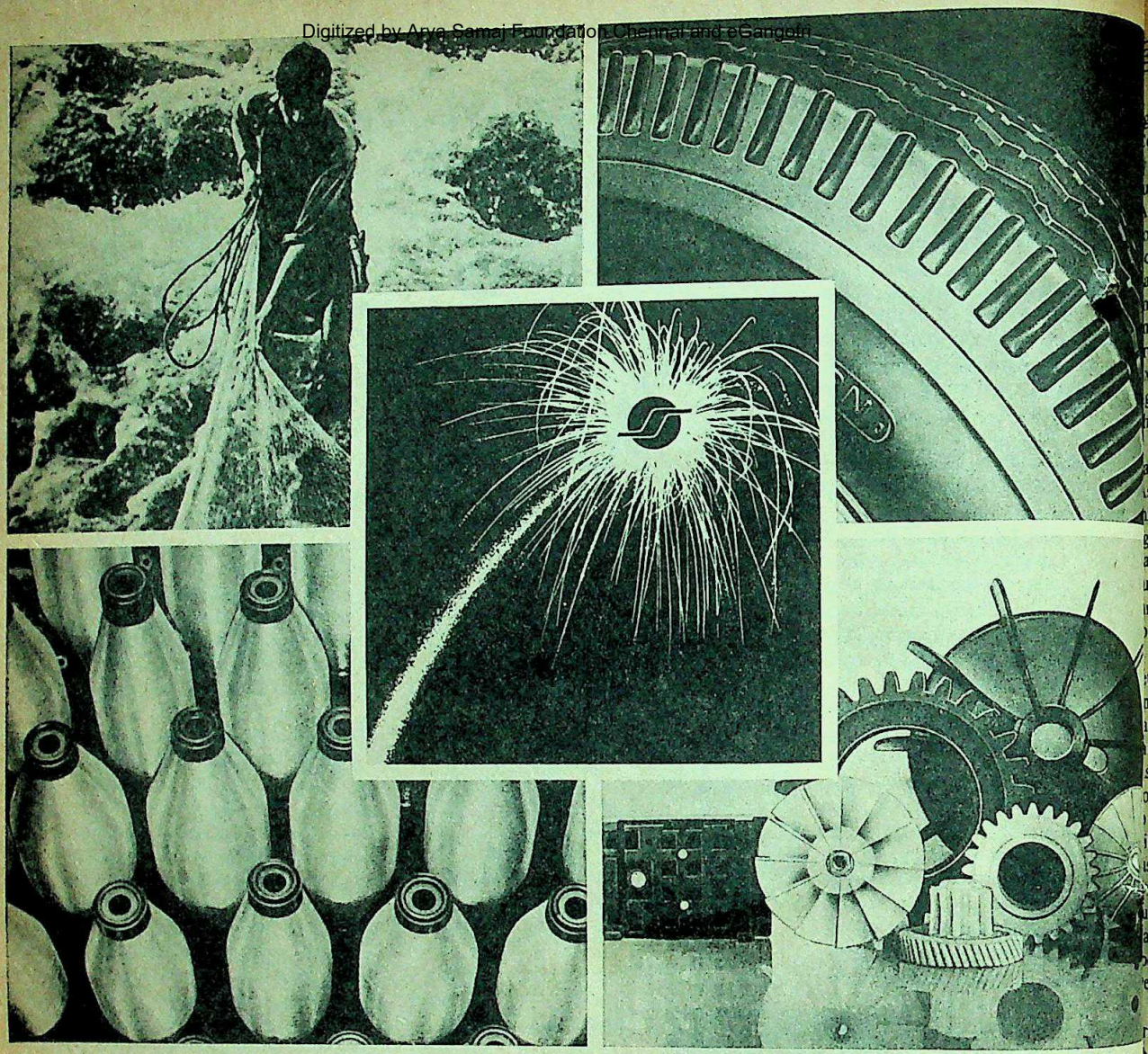

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greements had come into vogue after Coca-ola's exit in 1977, and Pure Drinks current-has at least 16 franchise deals in towns ich as Jammu, Saharanpur, Bareilly and hmedabad. Bottling plants for these fac-ories were supplied by Pure Drinks' sister ompany Mohan Ortmann and Herbst, now alled Mohan Machinery. Mukherjee's ove will therefore affect Pure Drinks the ost. The small bottlers who hold Campa ranchises, however, can qualify for excise xemption if they were to opt out of their greements with Pure Drinks and launch eir own brands of soft drinks.

Clubbed together, these bottlers will ch have to pay excise duty of 42 per cent. s this means a cut in profits, some of them ight even withdraw from their franchise greements. Pure Drinks' chief competitor arle has as many as 36 franchise agreements ut except for one or two plants, the rest had rnovers exceeding the exemption limit and are in no way affected by the amendment.

Most of the Campa franchises had been t up at costs ranging between Rs 12 lakh nd Rs 15 lakh per plant. Total investment in ch plant including vehicles and bottles nges between Rs 25 lakh and Rs 30 lakh. s suppliers of these plants, Pure Drinks will w have to provide an engineering service bring them to their rated capacities and ll have to help its franchises financially in se of trouble.

This will naturally place a considerable rden on the Pure Drinks companies. ampa sales in 1981 are estimated to be ost 9 million cases of 24 bottles each—the elhi plant accounts for two-thirds of this.

Great Pressure: Last fortnight, the Pure rinks franchise bottlers gathered in Delhi ng with owner Charanjit Singh to discuss effects of the removal of the exemption. DIA TODAY has learnt that tremendous ssure is being exerted on the Finance inistry through Congress(I) MPs and her friends of the Pure Drinks group in the rridors of power to amend this "drastic" tification and revert to the status quo.

But Mukherjee is in a dilemma. If he ees to restore the status quo, he will finitely invite censure in Parliament. hat is puzzling observers is that Mukherjee gged the soft drinks loophole at all, since hits directly at Charanjit Singh, a party lleague in the Lok Sabha: Speculation is about whether Singh's supposedly high-ced friends in the power-centre are indeed friends, because he apparently had no ling at all of the approaching crunch. The ediate effect of clubbing together all e Drinks franchises is an estimated total se burden of about Rs 4 crore. It should e as no surprise, then, if Campa-Cola ertising copy were to read: "Life is full of times".

—CHAITANYA KALBAG

CEMENT

Happy Days

BOMBAY's cement price crash last month echoed all over India. The once-scarce commodity was selling for Rs 68 to Rs 70 a bag last fortnight—down from Rs 135 a bag at the end of January—and stocks in the first 20 days of March were nearly 20,000 tonnes, as against the average arrival of 4,000 tonnes a quarter last year.

The black market was a dreary memory and stockists were offering liberal credit to buyers: the Associated Cement Companies (ACC), which makes about a third of India's cement, was forced to advertise in Bombay papers to find buyers at a price of Rs 74. Builders abandoned the strategy of stockpiles for need-based purchase; says Suresh Raheja, partner in the leading Bombay construction firm Raheja Builders: "The problem of adulteration is gone and the harassment that accompanied non-availability is over."

Liberalisation: The welcome transformation has been brought about by the simple dual distribution system proposed in the budget. Under this only 66 per cent of a plant's rated capacity will be taken over as controlled cement. Further, on any new production capacity created after January 1, 1982, the manufacturer can keep 50 per cent for the free market, more than the earlier 33.3 per cent.

Mini cement plants are exempt from price controls; even levy cement will get the manufacturer Rs 8 per tonne extra on the earlier Rs 536 per tonne. Enthuses Sanjay U. Ladiwala, president of the Cement Stockists and Dealers Association of Bombay: "It's an excellent scheme which should permanently solve our cement problems."

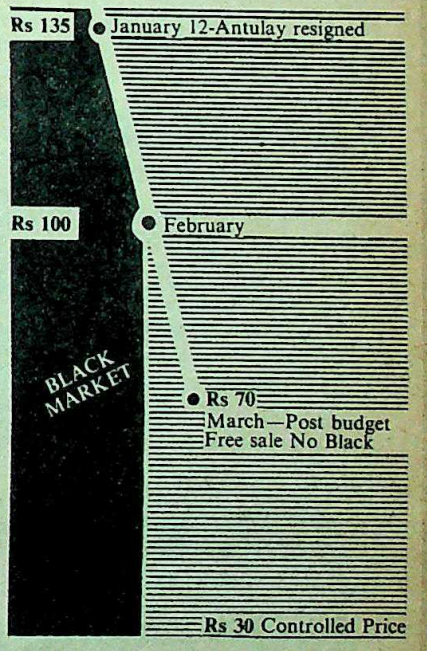
As the 66 per cent levy is on rated capacity rather than on production, manufacturers have received a prime incentive to produce more. Capacity utilisation levels have already begun to rise from an average of 78 per cent last year and by year's end are expected to touch 90 to 92 per cent.

Says S. Krishnaswami, managing director of ACC and president of the Cement Manufacturers Association: "The manufacturer has now to strive to produce 66 per cent of his capacity to get the taste of the cream. After that the more he produces the more cream he gets." ACC's present capacity utilisation is over 78 per cent and Krishnaswami projects a production level of 90 per cent by next January.

Breakthrough: Investment and profit plough-back are also likely to be galvanised. New factories by Larsen & Toubro, Narmada Cement, the Birlas and ACC are on the anvil. Asserts Krishnaswami: "It's been a breakthrough for the industry, the first time in 40 years that it has been given the opportunity to modernize."

And as the new cement order allows any user to import cement through the State Trading Corporation, domestic prices cannot be pegged artificially high—the landed cost of imported cement is roughly Rs 50 a bag. According to Krishnaswami, the Government is going to import 2 million tonnes of cement for free sale to keep prices at a reasonable level.

CEMENT: PRICE TUMBLE



With free market forces operating, a price slump is predicted for July. The estimated shortfall of about 3 million tonnes will be easily completed by the production spurt by existing plants, increases due to new ones and imports.

From April 1, in fact, the manufacturers will be lowering prices at all centres by Rs 2 to Rs 3 a bag in an effort to maintain uniformity—the decline in prices, assert market pundits, will probably be arrested at Rs 55 to Rs 60 a bag. Meanwhile, stocks are being rushed to Bombay in a bid to cash in on the last traces of the cement purchase mania. Will cement scandals become a thing of the past?

—CHANDER UDAY SINGH

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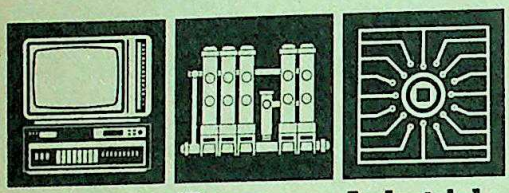

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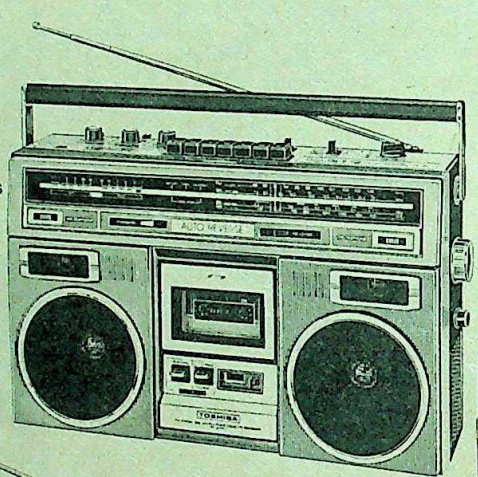

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- LEDs for tuning/battery power/ recording mode
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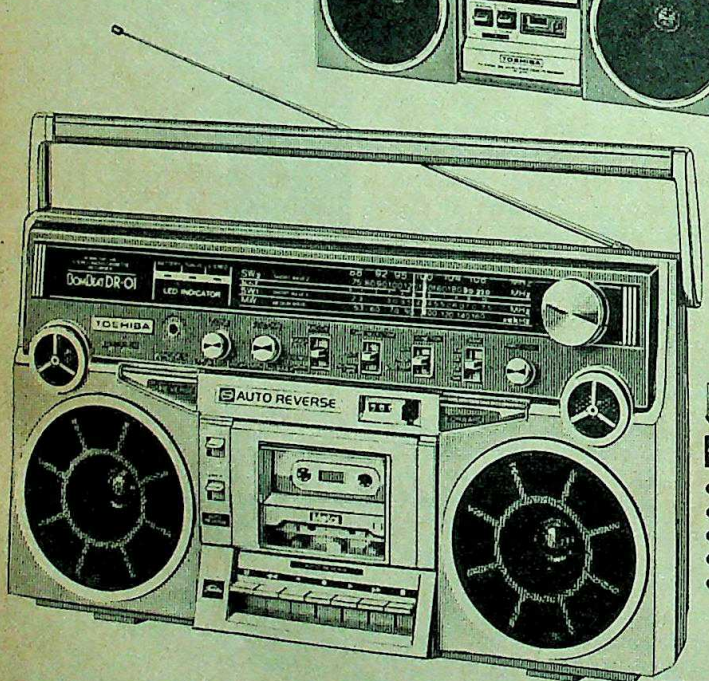

BOMBEAT DR-01

AUTO REVERSE

- 4-band (FM/MW/SW_1/SW_2) radio reception
- Powerful 14W output (7W × 2)
- 2-way 4-speaker system
- 3-position tape selector, metal tape compatibility
- LEDs for FM stereo/battery power/tuning

Toshiba **TOSHIBA**

TOKYO, JAPAN

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Unsold tractors at the Punjab Tractors factory: winter of despair

RACTORS

Stalled In A Furrow

FOR the 14 established tractor manufacturing concerns and some hundreds of small and medium-sized ancillary akers this has been a winter of despair. The ason has nothing to do with the weather lt a crippling credit squeeze at a time when aring for tractors was escalating.

The squeeze has put a sudden end to this mand. Since November, when the Reserve nk of India ordered that loans to farmers stopped, tractor sales have slumped amatically. In Punjab, dealers report that cks have been piling up for the last four nths. They add that demand has been so ak that in February most dealers stopped cing fresh orders. Industry sources es- ate that the dealers are stuck with at least 00 unsold tractors.

Hard Hit: Even the biggest manufacers have been hard hit by the slump. Eicher ctors which has units at Parwanoo and ridabad say that they have 800 tractors g unsold in their factories. Another marleader, Hindustan Machine Tools (HMT) ch makes Zetor tractors, is said to have 1,000 tractors at their factory and an tal number lying with dealers. HMT's tracunit which earned profits of Rs. 1.8 crore year seems poised to step back into the Already senior engineers at the plant say the production schedules may have to be ed down from April if the squeeze inues.

Average production in the industry as a le which was at 8,000 in the last quarter 981 has fallen sharply. In January it ped to 6,300 and in February it slumped er to 5,800. Says Chander Mohan, president of the Tractor Manufacturers' Association: "If this continues it will squeeze us out in just one year. Credit is the life-blood of the industry."

Most people in the industry agree with Mohan's gloomy assessment—Murad Baig, deputy general manager, corporate advertising and public relations department, Escorts Ltd, admits that the leading manufacturer has had to cut production by a large amount. However, company executives hope that a new directive to the banks for farmers by the RBI regarding easier availability of funds should start sales rolling again by June.

The effects of the squeeze have been even worse for the hundreds of units making tractor ancillaries. HMT has already asked many of its suppliers to cut down supplies. Punjab Tractors Limited (PTL) and Eicher are said to be following suit. Ancillary manufacturers all over Punjab are facing severe difficulties as payments are delayed and the banks are demanding repayments of loans. Says a small manufacturer: "This overnight policy change will eat away years of our labour."

Short-sighted: As yet, the slump in tractor sales has not affected agricultural production. But it is generally agreed that it will only be a matter of time before it does. Many people predict that even this kharif crop will not be up to expectations. Said Yash Mahajan, the managing director of PTL: "The far-sighted credit policy for inputs like irrigation, fertilisers and farm machines has helped production and the long-term growth of the economy." And there is no doubt that there is a large measure of truth in what he says. Punjab farmers have come to depend on modern farming techniques. and without them they could never have managed the Green Revolution.

In Punjab, which has a strong farm lobby, many people are questioning the wisdom of the Government's decision to cut off credit to farmers. Says former finance minister Balwant Singh: "This measure does not take into account the significant anti-inflationary role of the tractor industry achieved through an annual growth of 13 per cent which in turn contributed to the sustained growth of agriculture."

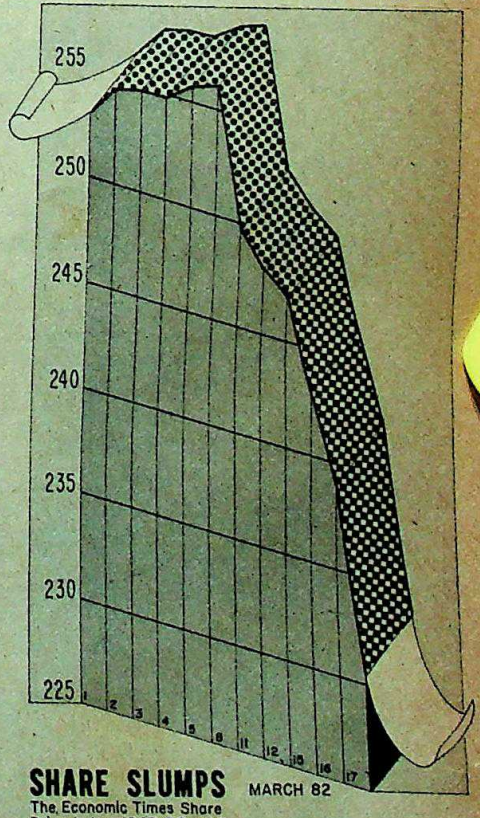
—GOBIND THUKRAL

THE MARKETS

On The Mend

"OH, what a fall was there, my countrymen," the bulls must have shouted last week as they retreated into the bylanes of Bombay's Dalal Street, chased by the bears on a hammering spree. Shares took a tumble all along the line, some of the "leaders" like Tata Engineering and Tata Steel losing much of their recently acquired shine. But too much should not be read into this unexpected crash. March is always a bad month for the stock markets, as most taxpayers faced with advance tax and compulsory deposit payments are strapped for cash and in no mood to extend their liabilities.

But this is only part of the story. There seems to be some kind of turmoil in the bullion market with gold prices down in the dumps in most international markets amidst



SHARE SLUMPS MARCH 82
The Economic Times Share Price Index: 1969-70=100
INDIA TODAY Chart by B.K.Sharma

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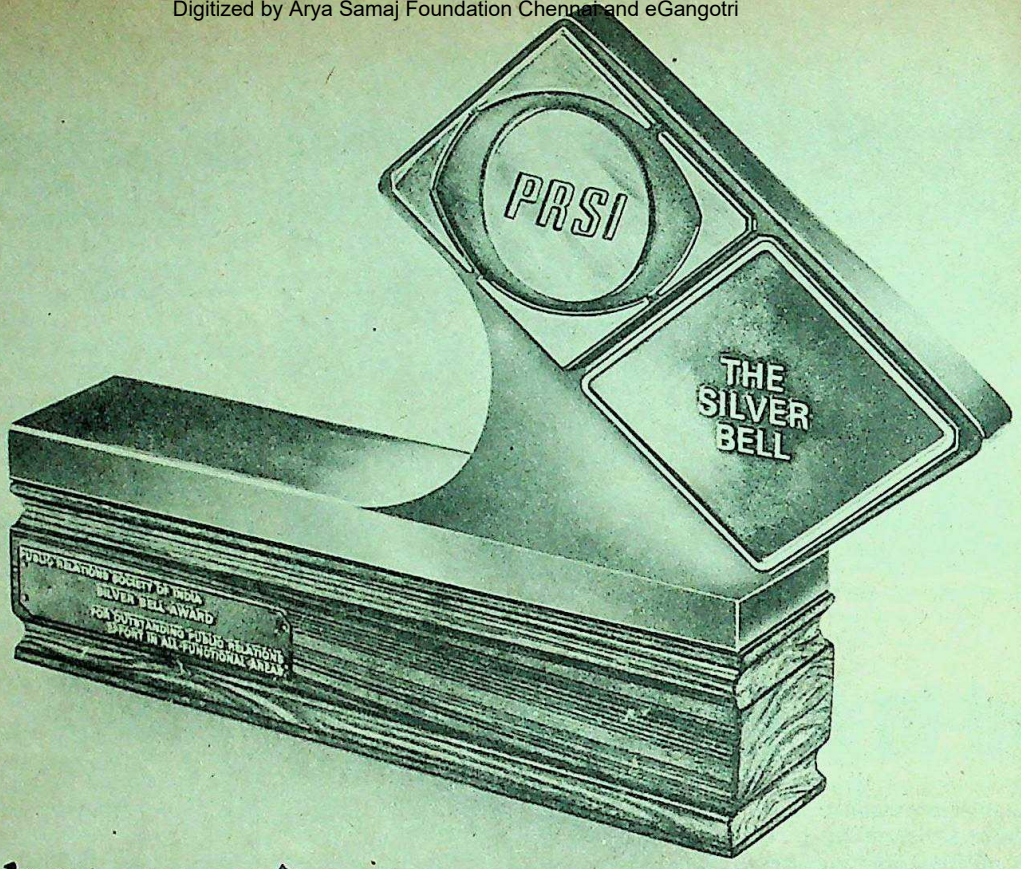

the award

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the campaign

A film titled 'Touch'
A film titled 'Vision'
A brochure titled Voltavision'

the citation

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- Chemicals
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- Pharmaceuticals and Consumer Products
- Project Engineering
- Textile Machinery

VOLTAS

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ACTIVE STOCKS

High 1982	Low	Close 18.3.82	Change on Fortnight
19.25	14.50 Ambalal Sarabhai	14.50	- 1.75
77.00	212.50 Associated Cement	315.00	- 22.00
59.00	47.50 Ashok Leyland	48.00	- 4.00
90.00	46.00 Atlas Copco	56.00	- 4.00
40.00	1,350.00 Bajaj Auto	1,425.00	-50.00
59.60	41.50 Ballarpur	41.50	- 6.00
97.00	352.00 Baroda Rayon	352.00	- 58.00
42.00	35.50 Bharat Gears	35.50	- 5.00
13.70	26.80 Birla Jute	31.50	nil
64.00	55.00 Blow Plast	55.00	- 9.00
80.00	66.50 Bombay Dyeing	70.00	- 7.00
24.70	20.20 Brooke Bond	22.70	0.30
18.60	16.10 Calcutta Electric	16.10	- 1.65
01.00	910.00 Century Spinning	910.00	-91.00
35.00	22.00 Chemical & Fibres	22.70	- 1.60
38.00	135.00 Colgate	135.00	13.00
6.20	13.25 Crescent Dyes	14.00	- 0.15
4.50	34.50 Delhi Cloth Mills	34.50	- 3.62
1.70	19.00 Dunlop	19.00	- 1.80
0.00	16.50 East India Hotels	18.62	- 0.63
1.00	33.00 Elecon	33.00	- 4.00
9.87	42.50 Escorts	42.50	- 2.37
0.50	35.75 Food Specialities	40.00	1.00
8.75	42.00 Garware Nylon	44.75	- 2.25
0.00	26.50 General Electric	26.50	- 2.00
7.20	32.20 Guest Keen Williams	32.20	- 4.00
6.00	368.00 Gujarat Fertilisers	368.00	- 74.00
9.20	43.00 Hindustan Aluminium	43.00	- 4.25
6.00	50.00 Hindustan Lever	50.00	- 5.25
1.66	25.70 Hindustan Motors	25.70	- 1.14
8.00	25.00 Hoechst Dyes	27.00	- 0.50
3.60	20.00 Indian Aluminium	20.00	- 1.50
5.20	21.50 Indian Cable	21.50	- 3.00
50	200.00 Indian Dyestuffs	200.00	-47.50
4.00	22.50 Indian Explosives	22.50	- 3.00
7.00	67.00 Indian Hotels	67.00	-36.00
5.00	30.00 Indian Organic	30.00	- 5.00
5.90	33.40 Indian Oxygen	34.00	- 0.85
0.00	125.00 Ingersoll-Rand	125.00	-15.00
5.00	29.50 Ion Exchange	29.50	- 5.00
4.85	21.65 ITC	23.10	- 0.70
5.25	31.30 Jayshree Tea	31.30	- 3.20
175	59.50 J.K. Synthetics	59.50	- 5.10
100	46.00 Kesoram	51.60	- 0.40
100	115.00 Kinetic Engineering	115.00	-30.00
75	25.00 Kothari (Madras)	25.00	- 3.00
00	51.00 Larsen & Toubro	51.00	- 4.00
50	15.40 Madura Coats	16.25	0.25
00	47.00 Mahindra & Mahindra	47.00	-14.00
50	13.10 Metal Box	13.10	- 1.75
00	26.00 Mukand Iron	26.00	- 5.25
00	186.00 National Organic	188.00	-10.00
50	35.50 Nirlon	35.50	- 4.50
30	39.50 Orient Paper	39.50	- 7.00
00	28.20 Pico Electronics	28.20	- 0.30
00	63.50 Ponds India	73.50	- 3.00
75	312.00 Premier Auto	313.00	-22.00
00	21.00 Ranbaxy	25.00	- 2.25
25	55.00 Raymond	55.00	- 2.00
80	118.50 Reliance	125.00	- 8.75
12	26.40 Shaw Wallace	26.50	- 2.00
00	43.12 Shriram Fibres	44.25	- 2.44
50	57.50 Siemens	57.50	- 3.50
20	13.00 SPIC	14.00	- 2.10
50	47.00 Tata Chemicals	47.00	- 8.50
00	321.00 Tata Steel	321.00	-64.20
75	440.00 Telco	440.00	127.00
0	50.50 Texmaco	50.50	- 10.50
00	26.00 Union Carbide	26.00	- 0.50
00	29.30 Usha Martin Black	29.30	- 2.20
00	238.00 Voltas	238.00	-11.00
	19.20 Zuari Agro	19.20	- 4.20

rumours of prices plunging through the 300 dollar-an-ounce barrier in the next few weeks. This is bound to be reflected in the local bullion market with a distinct possibility of prices coming down by Rs 200 or more (per 10 gm) by April. Since most Indians believe that gold is a better hedge against inflation than stocks, diversion of massive funds from the stock market cannot be ruled out. The next two months therefore should see a lot of commotion in the stock market, but once that phase is over, things should settle down and the market begin to resume its climb interrupted rather rudely by Pranab Mukherjee's thin gruel of a budget.

Highly Priced: In fact, a shake-out was indeed called for, for a large number of scrips were excessively priced, possibly as a result of speculative activity before the issue of convertible debentures. The current price levels are more realistic—Tata Steel at 400 was really too much—and will be even more attractive after a couple of more shake-outs. The investors might hold back for some time, possibly until April-end, when the market, stripped of most of its fat acquired over the year, will be ready for its next bull phase. By that time, the textile strike in Bombay should also be over—the strike is said to be costing the industry something like Rs 5 crore to 6 crore a week.

The corporate sector is by and large in good health, whatever the industrial leaders might be saying for the ears of the Government. The credit squeeze remain a source of worry but things should begin to look up after the Government is satisfied that inflation is really under control and has touched the zero-level. The squeeze might also force the companies to tighten up their financial management which would also be a good thing. Most of the current problems are therefore temporary and part of the usual ups and downs in what is still an activity with a large speculative element.

The bear phase is always a good time for selective pickings. Guest Keen Williams has come out with a bonus issue of one for three and should be an attractive proposition around 30 or so. Mukand Iron has lost nearly a third since it reached a high of 36 just around the debenture issue and should be good addition to a 'growth' portfolio. In fact, there is considerable evidence that most companies in the turnover range of Rs 75–150 crore a year are going in for massive expansion and diversifications—Texmaco, an engineering company is branching into chemicals—and because of their resources and experience they should have a much higher growth rate than the smaller units. There are about 20 to 25 such companies and though some of them, like Ashok Leyland, are possibly a little overpriced they should, growth-wise, do better than most.

WORLD VALUE OF RUPEES

Country	Currency Unit		TT Selling Rates (Rs)	TT Buying Rates (Rs)
Australia	As $	1	9.9245	9.8212
Austria	As Sch	100	56.2690	55.5782
Bahrain	Dinar	1	24.3386	24.1617
Bangladesh	Taka	100	43.9112	43.5921
Canada	Can $	1	7.7041	7.6195
Egypt	Egp £	1	11.1193	11.0385
France	Fr Frc	1	1.5153	1.4977
Hong Kong	Hk $	1	1.6093	1.5926
Indonesia	Rupiah	100	1.4187	1.4084
Iran	Rial	100	11.2872	11.2052
Italy	It Lira	100	0.7277	0.7211
Japan	Jap Yen	100	3.8583	3.8120
Kenya	K Shilling	1	0.8793	0.8729
Kuwait	Dinar	1	32.3424	32.1073
Malaysia	Ml $	1	4.0240	3.9799
Mauritius	Rupee	1	0.8680	0.8617
Nepal	Rupee	1	0.6963	0.6913
Netherlands	D Glds	1	3.5895	3.5465
Pakistan	Rupee	1	0.8606	0.8544
Singapore	Sing $	1	4.4173	4.3691
Spain	Sp Pt	100	8.9562	8.8783
Sri Lanka	Rupee	1	0.4491	0.4459
Sweden	Sw Kr	1	1.6060	1.5885
Switzerland	Sw Frc	1	4.9528	4.8978
Tanzania	T Sch	1	1.0040	1.9967
Thailand	Baht	100	41.0135	40.6461
UK	Pound	1	16.8976	16.7462
USA	US $	1	9.1800	9.2525
UAE	Dihram	1	2.4952	2.4771
USSR	Rouble	1	12.7738	12.6809
W. Germany	DM	1	3.9443	3.9013

These rates were supplied by The Bank of Tokyo, Ltd., New Delhi and quoted between the Banks on March 22,'82.

ECONOMIC TRENDS

	Latest	Change on month
PRICES		
ET Commodity Price Index, Mar 17 (1969–70 = 100)	238.6	- 3.6
Cereals	232.0	0.4
Chemicals	279.6	5.3
Cotton	214.3	- 11.8
Industrial Fibres	174.5	- 6.5
Sugar	224.9	- 28.6
Textile Yarn	221.1	- 1.9
Vegetable Oils	272.7	- 6.5
Gold, standard, Mar 18 (Rs per 10 gm)	1,640.00	- 115.00
Silver, Mar 18 (Rs per kg)	2,660.00	- 45.00
SHARES		
RBI Index, Feb 27 (1969–70 100)	191.2	0.9
Aluminium	76.6	nil
Cement	192.5	16.1
Fertilisers	205.9	7.6
Paper	226.9	1.1
Plantations	191.0	0.7
Shipping	199.0	- 36.2
Transport Equipment	301.3	2.7
MONEY		(per cent)
Money Supply, Feb 19		nil
Bank Deposits		- 0.5
Foreign Exchange Assets		- 12.4

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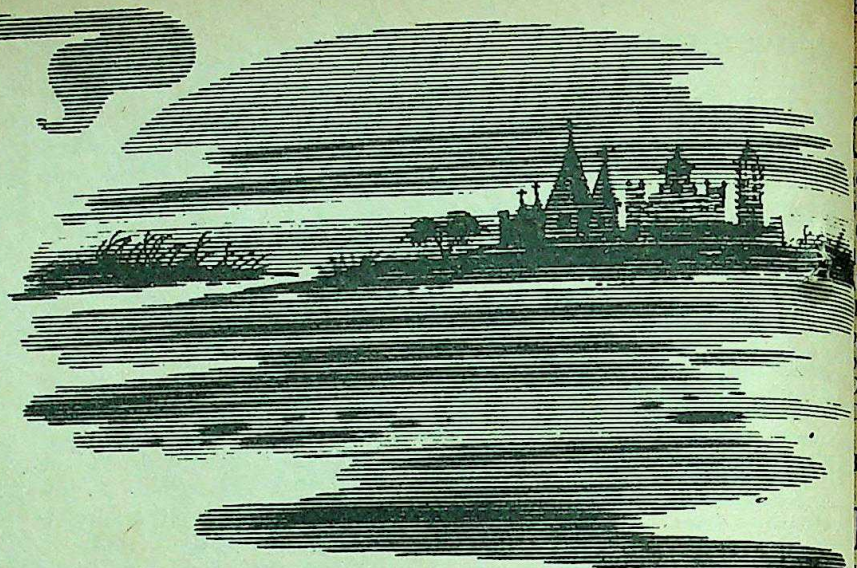

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OILING THE BAMBOO CURTAIN

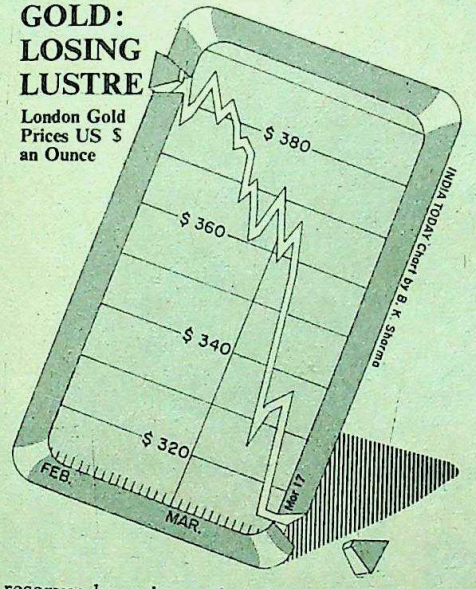
CHINA has opened an additional 43,000 sq km of offshore area to bids from foreign companies seeking oil. Contracts will be negotiated and signed this year, exploration will start next year and oil is expected to be produced by 1986. China now produces about 100 million tonnes of oil a year from oilfields on land. With the development of offshore areas, the production could double in about 20 years. China's regulations for foreign companies require them to provide exploration investment, undertake exploration operations and bear all risk. After a commercial field is discovered, both the foreign companies and the state-owned National Offshore Oil Corporation—equivalent to India's Oil and Natural Gas Commission—would invest in a cooperative development.

BULLION'S BACKSLIDE

THE slump in crude oil prices—here are reports of spot sales at around 28 US dollars a barrel—has badly affected the bullion market, and gold prices are expected to slip to 300 US dollars an ounce (about Rs 900 per 10 gm) in a month's time. On a single day last week, prices fell $10 dollars an ounce (Rs 30 per 10 gm) and the slide has continued, following the stock liquidation by cash-needy nations, especially oil exporters, whose foreign currency reserves have been shrinking due to lower oil revenues. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union and South Africa are almost certain to be selling their gold production heavily this year. At least one estimate puts Soviet 1982 sales up to 400 tonnes, double last year's unusually high level.

GOLD: LOSING LUSTRE

London Gold Prices US $ an Ounce



NO REST FOR THE RUPEE

DEVALUATION of the Pakistani rupee by about 20 per cent is on the cards, according to reports from London. The International Monetary Fund which recently sanctioned a massive loan to that country is said to believe that a devaluation of about 20–25 per cent is called for in order to restore Pakistan's competitive position in world trade. The slump in export earnings—by around 20 per cent in the first half of the current fiscal year—led the government to free the rupee from its link with the US dollar but it has apparently not helped. The country's main exports—raw cotton and rice—have slipped badly this year, so much so that raw cotton exports at Rs 49 crore in the first half of the year were barely a third of earnings from the same source during the comparable period last year.

LOOKING EASTWARDS

THE current wave of anti-British sentiment in Malaysia is so strong that several British companies have lost out on hundreds of contracts. South Korea's Hyundai Corporation recently got a Rs 340-crore contract to build a bridge to the island of Penang, edging out several US and European bidders. The Malaysian Government claims that British companies are dragging their feet on the country's industrialisation plan, called the New Economic Policy, which specifies that by 1990, 30 per cent of the corporate sector is to be owned by ethnic Malays rather than by foreigners or Malaysian Chinese. Urging all Malaysians to "look east" rather than west, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad is keen on forging stronger economic ties with Asian countries. Historically, most Malaysian students went to Britain for further studies; now they are going to Japan and Korea which has agreed to accept hundreds of students for advanced technical training.

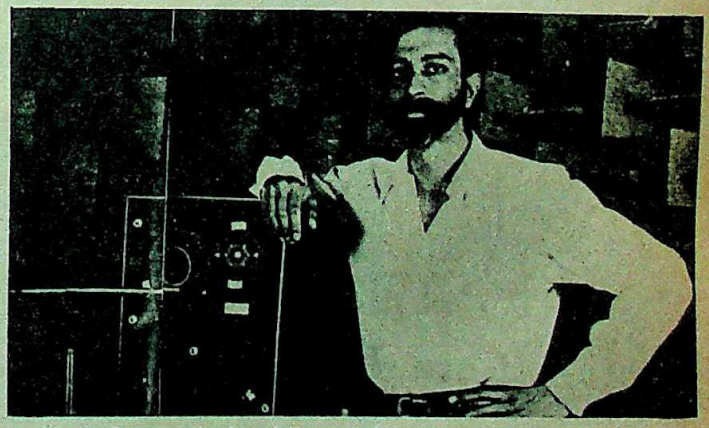
TIN SOLDIERS

MALAYSIA is trying to form a cartel of tin producing countries on the lines of OPEC and has an agreement 'in principle' with Thailand and Indonesia to set up a tin producers' association. Commodity cartels have not always succeeded in the past but tin may be an exception. Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand produce more than two-thirds of the world's tin and Malaysia is so keen on the new cartel that it is said to be behind the 'mystery' buyer that has purchased nearly a quarter of the world's annual production of tin over the past nine months.

The man behind the cartel idea is Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad who believes that the tin market is being manipulated in London through the London Metal Exchange. Mahathir wants tin marketing to be operated from South-east Asia which produces most of the tin anyway and the proposed cartel would be one way of doing that. As part of its overall strategy to keep tin prices high, Malaysia, which produces nearly a third of the world's tin, has announced a 20 per cent cutback in production this year.

PLAYING IT RIGHT

A Calcutta-born engineer is behind the world's first commercial record player that plays the record the way it was recorded. A problem with conventional record players has always been that the pick-up arm traces an arc across the record, pressing the needle against the outer edge of the groove. Although it was known that a radial arm would solve this problem, nobody had come up with a practical solution until Subir Pramanik, 40, who works for Bang & Olufsen, a Danish company, solved the problem. "It took us nine years at Bang & Olufsen," says Pramanik, "to perfect a record player so that it plays in a straight line from the edge of the record to the centre." He has been working for the firm for the last 15 years after studying mechanical engineering in London.



Pramanik: breakthrough in sound reproduction

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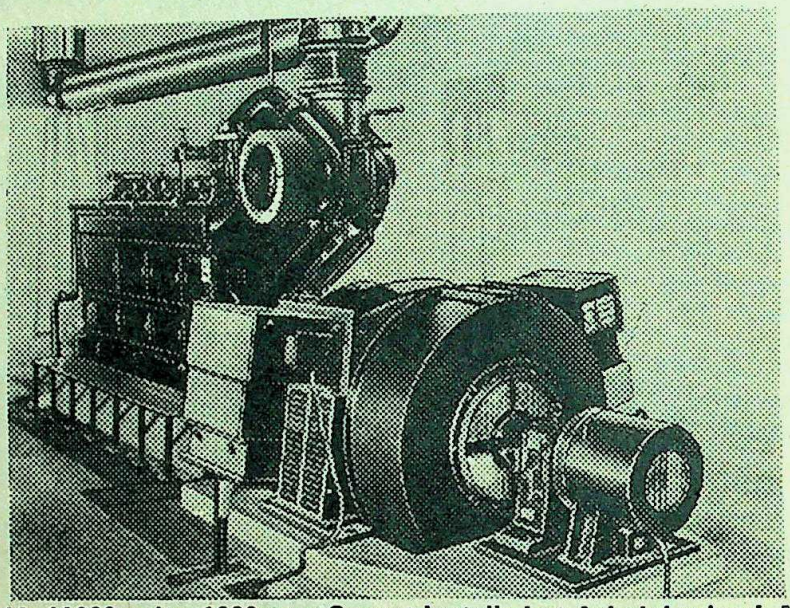

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INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS

From Russia With Verv

HISTORY IS made of both large and small pieces. The history of Indo-Soviet relations, one of the stablest bilateral friendships of the world since 1945, has been written both of large events like the Khrushchev-Bulganin visit of 1955 and small ones like the famous sentence in a 1959 Soviet statement spelling out Moscow's dilemma between Chinese "brothers" and Indian "friends". Analysts in India and the western countries have burnt midnight oil wondering if the six-day visit of the Soviet Defence Minister, Marshal Dmitri F. Ustinov to India in the Ides of March was a big or a small piece in the still unfolding mosaic of Indo-Soviet congress.

Few, however, took note of a sudden change in the Soviet mass media view of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi which accompanied diplomatic preparations for the Ustinov visit. The two are of a piece with the latest Soviet contribution to the mosaic of Indo-Soviet cooperation. Indeed, the significance of the Ustinov visit cannot be comprehended except in the context of the changed Soviet perception of Mrs Gandhi.

Significance: Before coming to that change, it is necessary to clear a few points. Marshal Ustinov came to India leading the most powerful Soviet military delegation ever to visit a foreign country. He was accompanied by the Soviet Air Chief, Marshal Koutakhov, Naval Chief, Admiral Gorshkov and the Deputy Defence Minister General Shavanov and 30 generals. The composition of the delegation was worked out between the two Governments over several weeks, if not months, of diplomatic negotiations. Which means that the Indian Government willingly agreed to receive such a high-powered delegation, knowing fully the kind of speculations it would generate in certain foreign offices. The delegation was not simply thrust upon India.

Besides, the Ustinov delegation was only a shade more powerful than the delegation which his predecessor, the late Marshal Grechko, led to India in February 1975. Marshal Koutakhov and Admiral Gorshkov were members of that delegation also; only the deputy chief of the Soviet army was an added embellishment to the Ustinov team. In 1975, the Indian Government played the Grechko visit on as low a key as it did the Ustinov visit last month.

Indeed, except in the years 1971-72, Mrs Gandhi has always tried to underplay the military side of the Indo-Soviet relationship—which, however, has steadily expanded. During the Grechko visit in 1975, the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship was not mentioned in any formal speeches of the hosts; but it was a ritual burden of each formal speech of distinguished guest, though it did find mention in the comm issued at the end of the visit. The same pattern was repeated the Ustinov visit last month.

There is another striking similarity between the visits two successive Soviet defence ministers to India, an interval years separating the two. In 1974-75, Mrs Gandhi's Gover was engaged in drawing up the framework of a long-term defence build-up, the core of which was to acquire modern weapons and, as possible, to strengthen the fence industrial base. The was completed during rule, and the current acqu of sophisticated air MiG-25s, Jaguars and 2000s—with licences for eventual manufacture in is part of that defence b plan.

Defence Needs: Mr dhi, during her one-year defence minister, set in a continuum of defence ing for the late 1980s an 1990s because the tr from one generation pons to a newer one has track of the latest so tions in the world arm industry. The emphasis long-term, 15-year defen dernization plan now in not so much on acquisi new weapons as on buil a modern, self-reliant production base.

This can be achieve through the transfer of technologies to India on sive scale. The United States is closed to India as a so advanced defence technology, even for advanced weapons The West European countries are willing to transfer techn but their relatively small defence production base mak technologies as well as weapons far too expensive.

Thus, the Soviet Union alone can help India expand its production base through the early 1990s on terms and con that neither grate upon India's political sensitivities nor India's lean purse. In 1975, Marshal Grechko brought Gandhi the welcome promise of Soviet cooperation in defence modernization programme. In March 1982, M Ustinov came on a similar welcome mission. He assure Gandhi and her defence minister that India could count maximum possible Soviet cooperation in strengthening and ing its defence production base.

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...Moscow perceives Indira Gandhi and her party, the Congress(I), as the only viable popular middle force in India that can pursue a domestic policy of "democratic transformation" and a foreign policy of "peace and anti-imperialism."

The transfer of defence technologies is not a daily transaction in the marketplace of international politics. It takes place only between and among countries which have a mutuality and congruence of strategic and political interests. Only the Soviet Union has an adequate congruence of strategic and political interests in the development of India's *real* defence capability. The Ustinov visit put the seal on expanding Indo-Soviet collaboration to enable India to build a defence production base which will take the measure of American arms transfers to Pakistan, China's military modernization, and the unilateral US military build-up in the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf.

New Emphasis: Before reaching this crucial decision the Soviets appear to have made a reassessment of the Indian political situation as it is likely to develop in the 1980s. The result of this reassessment was reflected in a recent report on India printed in the mass circulation Soviet weekly *New Times*. Written by the weekly's Special Correspondent, Leonid Zhegalov, apparently with the approval of the Soviet Ambassador in New Delhi, Vorontsov (who has the status of a deputy foreign minister), the report indicates the highest rating of Indira Gandhi by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) leadership since she returned to power in January 1980.

The report lists India's achievements in grain output, space technology and so on, which is nothing unusual in any Soviet assessment of India. It praises Mrs Gandhi's "peace-loving foreign policy",—which, too, is nothing new. What is new, however, is the emphasis it puts on the "progressive" and "anti-imperialist" character of Mrs Gandhi's foreign policy, which, it says, has "further enhanced" India's role as a peace-loving, anti-imperialist nation.

THE *New Times* (No. 6, February 1982) report certifies that Mrs Gandhi, since her return to power, has been broadly pursuing the foreign and domestic policies of her father, Jawaharlal Nehru. It refers to her high popularity which was reflected in a recent public opinion poll in INDIA TODAY and adds, "This is evidence of the confidence most Indians have in the foreign policy of the Government headed by Indira Gandhi and of their hopes that the efforts made by her Cabinet to solve the country's complex problems will meet with success". It says that Indians can be "rightly proud" of the "democratic transformations at home" and "intensification in "anti-imperialist struggle in the international arena" carried out by the Congress party regime since the days of Nehru.

The report notes that the "Right-wing bourgeois parties" are trying to form a "single opposition group" with the sole purpose of "toppling" Mrs Gandhi's Government. "As for the Left-wing opposition, which stands for the speediest implementation of the policy of lessening social inequality and solving the most pressing problem of providing tens of millions of people with a livelihood, there is *very little unity in its ranks*."

Shrewd Moves: The political significance of the *New Times* report on India cannot be over-emphasised. For the first time since February 1980, the Soviets have lauded Mrs Gandhi's *internal* policies, have divided the Opposition between "Right-wing bourgeois" parties and a Left that is split and disunited. This means that Moscow perceives Indira Gandhi and her party, the Congress(I), as the only viable popular middle force in India that can pursue a domestic policy of "democratic transformation" and a foreign policy of "peace and anti-imperialism".

This is a significant departure from the assessment of Mrs Gandhi's election victory made by the *New Times* Correspondent, A. Usvatov, in January 1980. The vote, he wrote, was not so much "for" Indira Gandhi as "against" the discredited Janata and Lok Dal coalitions—which groups he did not describe as "Right-wing" parties (*New Times*, No. 2, 1980). Even more significant is the Soviet reassessment of unity of the Left, that is, of the two communist parties—the CPI and the CPI-M. Before the 1980 poll, India-based correspondents of *Tass*, *Pravda* and *New Times* wrote approvingly of the unity-in-action tactics of the two parties, to which the CPSU itself had made no mean contribution.

After the election, the *Tass* Correspondent in India, Boris Chekhonin, claimed that "major successes" scored by the two communist factions "stand out in specially bold relief against the background of the shattering defeat sustained by two bourgeois groups", and predicted that the communists "will now be an important political factor in the parliamentary Opposition". Every single report on India published in the Soviet print medium in 1980 and 1981 gave explicit support to communist unity.

The sudden change of stance may represent one or more of several stands in a Soviet reappraisal of the political situation in India. One: Indira Gandhi, attacked from both Right and Left, may incline towards the Right at home and the United States abroad, and must therefore be given Soviet political support. Two: the CPSU has changed its mind about CPI—CPI-M unity and would like the CPI to cooperate with Mrs Gandhi. Three the CPSU has taken a dim view of the CPI leader Rajeswara Rao's public stand that communist unity would move ahead regardless of the wishes of the CPSU. Reports suggest that Rao's "independence" has alienated him from a majority of the CPI politbureau members and that his leadership might be reduced to a nominal value at the Varanasi congress of the party to be held towards the end of March.

An interesting sideline to the Ustinov visit of March was that the CPI leaders were not invited to any of the receptions the Soviet defence minister gave when he was in Delhi, whereas two CPI leaders attended at least one reception Marshal Grechko gave during his 1975 visit. Also noteworthy is the fact that Ustinov returned to Delhi every evening during his six-day stay in India and held several rounds of consultations at the Soviet Embassy. Spokesmen of the Indian Government tried their best to keep the profile of the visit low, while reporters obliged by remaining remarkably non-inquisitive.

As the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan has receded from the preoccupation of nations, a broad congruence of Soviet and Mrs Gandhi's world views has once again come to be framed. The Soviets have applauded the manner in which she has handled the questions of normalisation of relations with China and a no-war pact with Pakistan. With India's relations with the US at an all-time low, Indo-Soviet strategic and political accord is once again on the ascendant.

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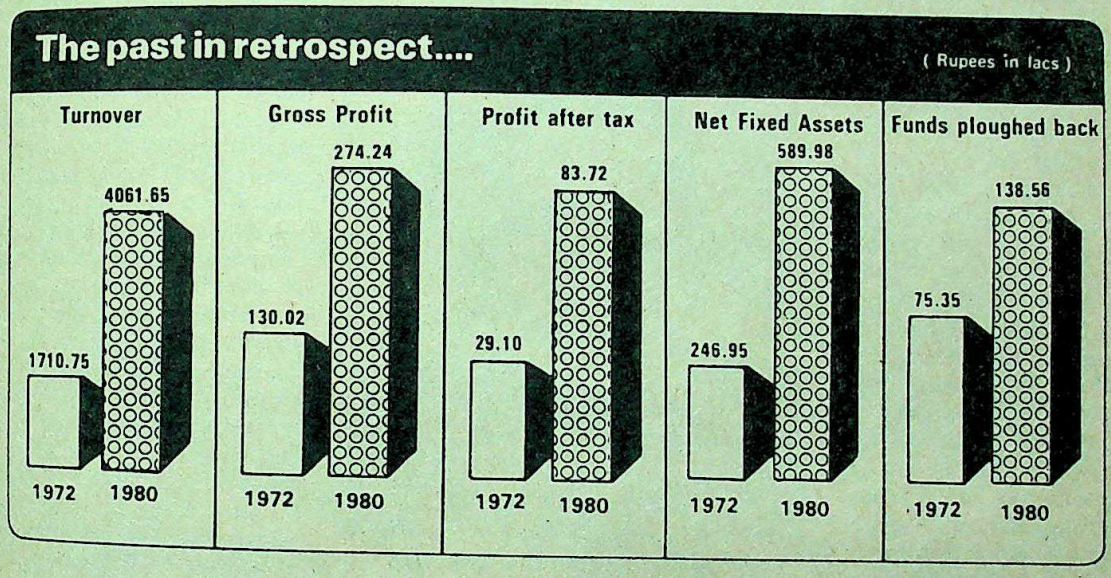

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UNIVERSITIES

Battle At Kurukshetra

MANIAN Kuttappan, vice-chancellor of Kurukshetra University, Haryana, rules with a firm hand. It is almost one year since he took over the trouble-racked campus and he has made his presence felt in no uncertain terms—no direct elections to the students' union, no speeches by guest speakers which could spark unrest, increase of the teachers' probation period from two years to three "to make them work", and introduction of the rotation system for the staff to prevent the formation of cliques. Says Kuttappan: "I have brought more discipline."

Wielding the bureaucratic whip comes easily to Kuttappan, who is also the commissioner, Ambala division. He has brought uneasy calm to the campus, but there is every sign that this will not last. Kuttappan's problems begin with Pro Vice-Chancellor Ram Parkash, whom the vice-chancellor, in letters to the chancellor and meetings with Chief Minister Bhajan Lal has accused of dereliction of duty and of running a "parallel administration". Charges Kuttappan: "I have given him the important job of examinations but still he goes and complains to politicians." Parkash, on his part, is reported to have told Bhajan Lal and the chancellor that no worthwhile work was being given to him and since under the statute of the university he has to be allotted work by the vice-chancellor there was little he could do.

Discipline Overdone: At another level, the students are grumbling about the new system of indirect election to the students' union and the fact that they are not allowed to invite to their functions speakers such as columnist Kuldip Nayar and Rashtriya Swyamsewak Sangh chief Balasaheb Deoras. Kuttappan asserts that "I cannot allow the university to become an arena of politics."

It is evident, however, that Kuttappan has overdone his discipline drive—the campus hosted police camps for months, and the deputy commissioner and the superintendent of police visited it twice a day to harangue students and teachers. Even today, the numbers of visiting cars are noted down, and other vistors are shadowed in the campus.

The last upheaval at Kurukshetra was the 40-day strike by non-teaching staff which ended in December. Kuttappan took back all dismissed and suspended employees only after direct intervention from Delhi. Registrar R.P. Hooda now claims "total peace with everybody in his seat and doing his job", but the employees are resentful of the fact that they were made to apologise in writing afterwards, according to Babu Ram Gupta, president of the Kurukshetra University Non-Teaching Employees' Association.

Dismissals: The strike had repercussions at the top. At an Executive Council meeting in November, six heads of departments—members of the council by virtue of their being deans of various faculties—had opposed the proposed dismissal of some strike leaders and had wanted Kuttappan to take action on the basis of the inquiry report

Kuttappan: ruling with a firm hand

approved by the council. Kuttappan went ahead with the suspensions and dismissals anyway, and later some heads of departments were removed from their posts under the rotation system and thus ceased to be members of the council.

The deposed have challenged their removal in the High Court. Kuttappan admits he implemented the system on "an experimental basis to neutralise some forces". As for a list of 37 allegations against him circulated round the campus, he brushes them aside, adding: "Those who have been monopolising senior positions are feeling hurt because they have been cut to size."

Kuttappan is not the only bureaucrat to have had a taste of a campus in ferment. The Maharishi Dayanand University (MDU) in Rohtak was headed by Education Secretary Jai Dev Gupta for about a year. Across the border in Punjab, Chief Secretary Ishwar Chander Puri was the acting vice-chancellor of the prestigious Punjab Agriculture University (PAU), Ludhiana Punjab Education Secretary J.P. Gupta occupied a similar chair at the Guru Nanak Dev University (GNDU), Amritsar, until Dr Grewal replaced him.

Factional Strife: This 'bureaucratisation' of the universities has come about in part because of factional politics in the institutions themselves and in part because of the politicians' inability to keep their hands off. In Haryana, for instance, a [illegible] cannot survive as vice-chancellor of the MDU or Kurukshetra University. Similarly, in Punjab, non-Sikh heads for the GNDU and Punjabi University, Patiala, are out of question. So the decision to impose administrators is in a way forced on the powers-that-be.

But politics takes a heavy toll. Bhajan Lal is engaged in a running feud with deposed MDU vice-chancellor Hardwari Lal. At present the university registrar is looking after things until Hardwari Lal's petition challenging his removal is disposed of. Punjabi University Vice-Chancellor Bhagat Singh—an Akali appointee who was removed and got his post back through the High Court—cannot but watch helplessly as the Akali and Congress(I) factions on the campus spar for advantage. Bhagat Singh is to retire in December.

Stifling Atmosphere: The constant squabbling has had its inevitable effect on quality. Said Dr Gurbhagat Singh of Punjabi University: "There is a great sense of waste. We feel stifled. The talent is decaying because there is no one to inspire or lead us. The major universities of the world have adopted the inter-disciplinary approach and given leadership to those who could lead, unmindful of their age." His opinions are shared by Dr B.S. Dahiya of Kurukshetra University, Dr A.K. Gupta of PAU and a host of other teachers. Says one: "We are producing half-baked graduates."

Parkash: aggrieved

One light at the end of the tunnel is the appointment of Sukhdev Singh as vice-chancellor of PAU. A casualty of Emergency, the head has assured intention to "not allow any time to be wasted". The rotation system will be implemented, says Sukhdev Singh, adding: "We want to work. We have some of the best talent in agriculture and related sciences and could compete with any other university in the world." While the eminent agriculture scientist's intentions are laudable that he and its fellow institutions have a long way to go before they are rid of the cankers of politics and religion and politics.

—GOBIND THUKRAL in Kurukshetra

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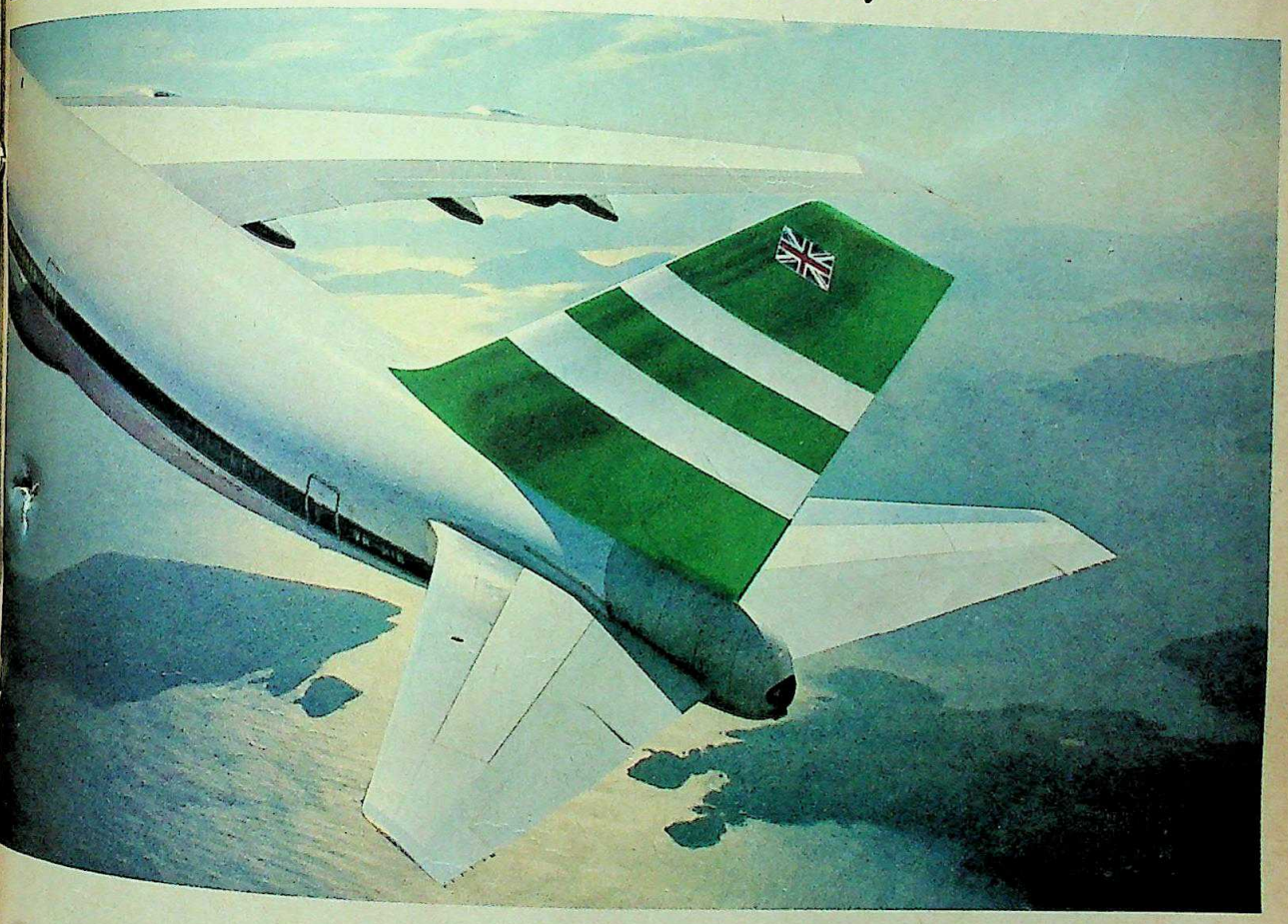

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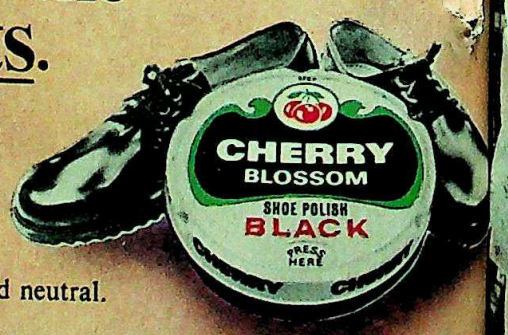

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g Is ountiful

VER since Ramesh Sippy's *Sholay* ran away with a bundle of box-office receipts, there has been a spate of big- multi-star spectacles on the Indian However, only three other 70 mm were made after *Sholay*, and down there haven't been any of the wide- opiates. In April, veteran film pro- M.C. Punnoose—better known as chen—will fill that gap with his super *Padayottam* (Soldiers) in Malaya-

sed on Malabar folklore, chen's magnum opus is crammed with impossibly ritzy sets, flaming for- old Portuguese men-of-war and me- gore. All this is laced with the latest in With a price tag of Rs 1 crore in an where an average film costs Rs 15 *Padayottam* is the biggest thing in films south.

Indigenous: It will also be the first 70 mm film to have been processed in India. Shot with a 35 mm camera, have been blown up to double the at the Prasad Film Laboratory, a spokesman of the labo- "What the Sippys and others did in can be done now in Madras."

from *Padayot-* and (inset) Appa- super spectacle

Appachen's glittering offering has the southern financiers in a ferment, who wonder what a 70 mm boom would do to their business.

Appachen's career in the industry spans more than 30 of his 56 years. In the early '50s, he and elder brother Kunchacko set up Udaya, the first film studio in Kerala, at Alleppey. This churned out as many as 80 films. After the death of his brother, Appachen launched his own concern, Navodaya, and continued with an increasingly successful career.

He was the first Malayalam producer to make a cinemascope movie, *Thacholi Ambu*, which cost Rs 30 lakh and brought in more than Rs 1 crore. This was followed by a rash of cinemascope films, and to date more than 50 have been made. Last year, the pioneer made a romance, *Manjil Virinja Pookal* with new actors for Rs 22 lakh, which became one of the biggest box-office hits in Malayalam film history, adding to his stature as the leading figure in the industry.

As *Padayottam* is getting ready for release, there are critics who fear that Appachen's opus may well prove to be his Waterloo. However, the producer has obviously taken great pains to ensure that his epic keeps the cash registers ringing. Ten years ago he made a film in 16 days; *Padayottam* has taken more than a year. Says Appachen: "It is going to cater to the changing values and changing tastes of cinegoers."

Profits Expected: Initially, the film will be released in four 70 mm theatres in Trivandrum, Ernakulam, Trichur and Calicut—Kerala boasts the largest number of 70 mm theatres in India. Appachen has booked these for 25 weeks. Responding to a heavy publicity blitz, people are expected to flock to the theatres, and Appachen expects to gross Rs 50 lakh from these four theatres alone. Later, the 1,000-odd rural centres will screen 35 mm cinemascope prints. Appachen calculates that the total takings will break box-office records. He asserts: "With my own distribution set-up and personal contact with so many exhibitors the film will never flop."

Prem Nazir, the leading man of *Padayottam* and evergreen Malayalam film hero—he has starred in over 600 films—has complete faith in his producer, Nazir says: "Appachen is the last moghul in the Malayalam film industry. When he made the first cinemascope film, panic ensued but he had the last laugh." Nazir is confident that *Padayottam* will be a smash hit. Another producer, P.V. Gangadharan is already looking into the future, and says: "If *Padayottam* clicks then every Dubai-returned chap in Kerala will start making 70 mm movies."

—SREEDHAR PILLAI

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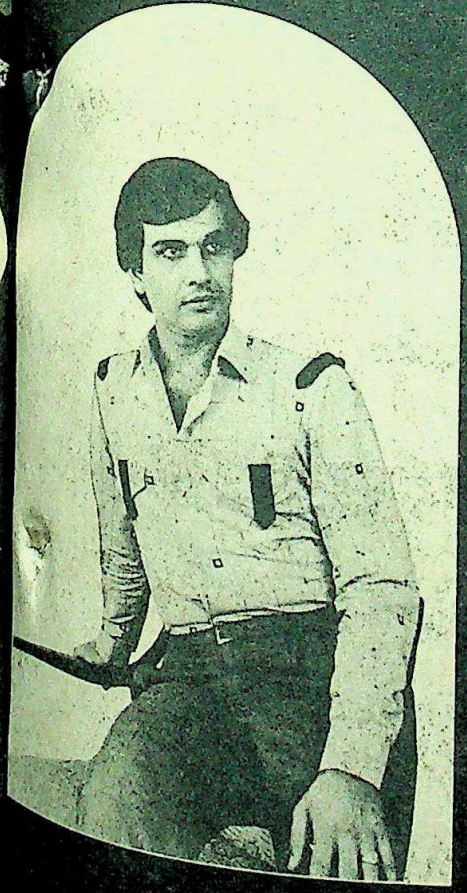

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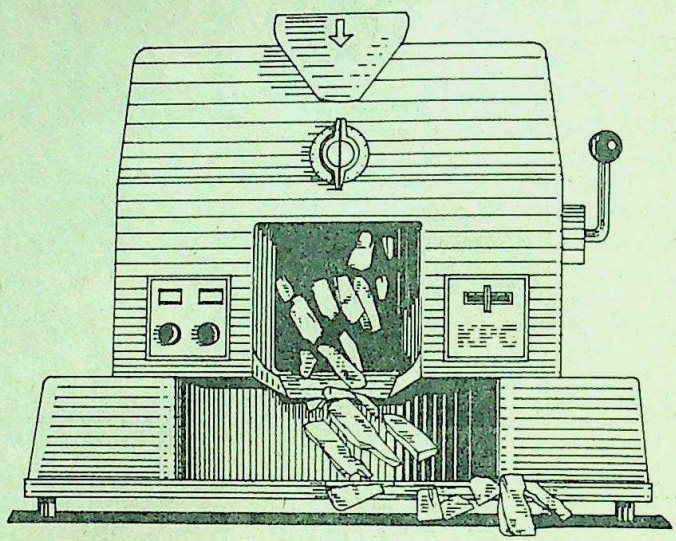

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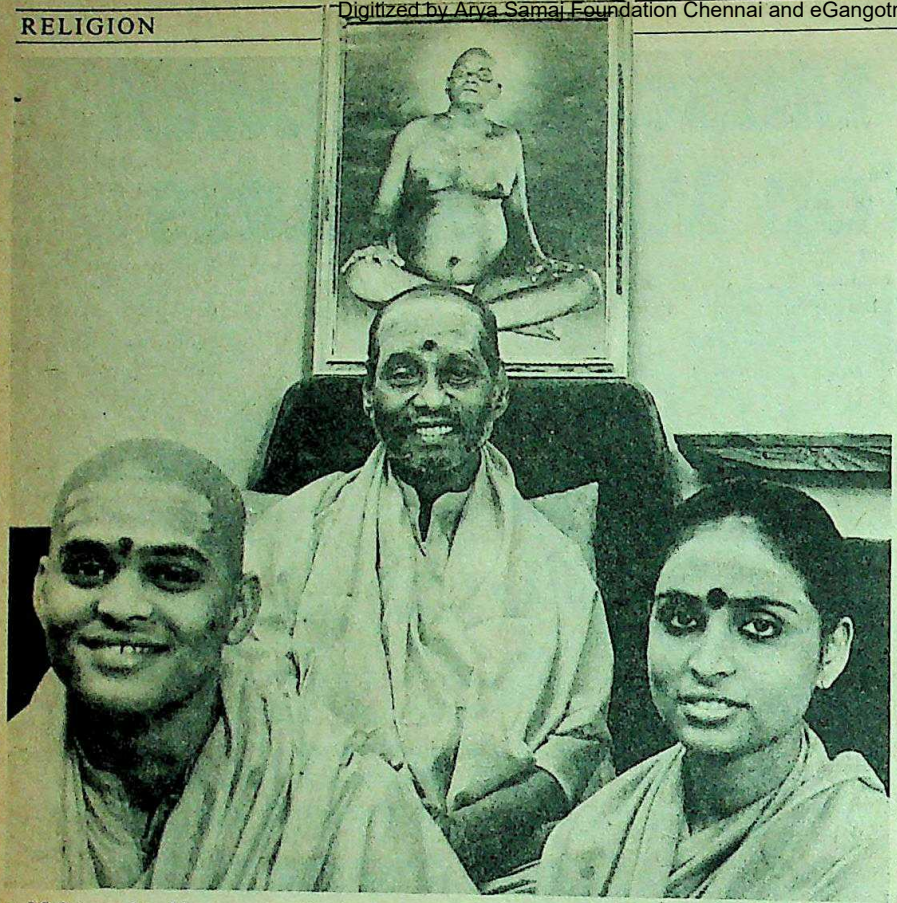

GAURI HIBERT

Muktananda with successors Subhash and Malti pose before photo of guru Nityananda

MUKTANANDA

Blue Chip Corporation

IT WAS classic corporate hard sell: talented public relations by a top-notch expert in the field, well thought-out promotion, an internationally visible launching pad at the conference of celebrated psychologists, and nation-wide tours, meetings, discourses and publicity announcing the approach of a phenomenon. Posters and press advertisements promoted the meetings in Delhi, Bombay, Madras and a string of smaller towns: and a large number of glossy books and brochures distributed at the meets described both the organisation and the man who heads it.

Behind the newest package of supermarket spirituality to hit the country was a tiny, sparsely-bearded, dark-skinned guru in saffron, Swami Muktananda Paramahansa, 73, siddha yogi-turned western-style godman who has amassed a following as diverse culturally as it is widespread. In fact, Muktananda's 2.5 lakh foreign followers are spread out in 72 countries around the globe.

Successors: To an extent, the media blitz is only leading to Muktananda's big event of 1982—May 8, his 74th birthday, when he will "pass on" his spiritual powers and learning to two young disciples, Subhash Shetty, 19, and his sister Malti Shetty, 24, children of a devotee of over 30 years standing. A flick of his fingers, his followers are told, will pass the godhead to them, make the pair aware of every universal truth, self-realised and perfect beings who will take over his *gaddi* "and rule the spiritual roost after him". Said Muktananda: "If there is an ashram it has to have its owner to run it. I am getting old—74. I am choosing my successors while I am still alive and I will put them on my seat."

At 73, Muktananda appears a spiritually lively man who routinely strolls around his ashram buildings, spends at least three hours each day in an inner courtyard at Ganeshpuri, where crowds of darshan-seekers queue up to get an opportunity to touch his feet or ask him to solve their problems.

Determination: Turning his attention homewards, after over a decade spent on consolidating and expanding his empire abroad, Muktananda is determined to launch himself on a scale which will outclas guru who came before him. Sinc October, when he completed a thre world tour which culminated in New the guru has started a huge campaign at substantially enlarging the base roughly 5 lakh domestic disciples.

Aiming for the peak of the esote set of spiritualism, he and his followers a string of meditation meetings arou country, concentrated two-day sessi which the participant is virtually pro his *kundalini* on a platter. Seventy sessions, or "intensives" have been held the combined reach of the guru extend roughly 13,000 people. Soon after his from New York the guru confided handful of trusted followers that the of India were finally ready to rece teachings.

Christopher Forsythe, the stra Australian newspaper editor and a who handles public relations for the admits that the past few months have Muktananda and his band of swamis ing out to the country in an all-out ef propagate both the guru and his teac "There was a time when Ganeshpuri quiet retreat where he came only to me But today it has become a base for sionary activity."

RAPIDLY filling the slot left Bhagwan Rajneesh when denly left for the US la Muktananda now appears regularly pages of national newspapers and gazines. Three large press conferences been held by the guru in the last five m and he has remained highly visible press. Forsythe himself has written ticles for major newspapers and mag in the country, and as many have ap independently of the public relations intensive is accompanied by a blaze o and poster publicity, and by March ea aired intensives had been held in Madras and a string of smaller to

Muktananda with Rajasthan Governo Mehra: a diverse following

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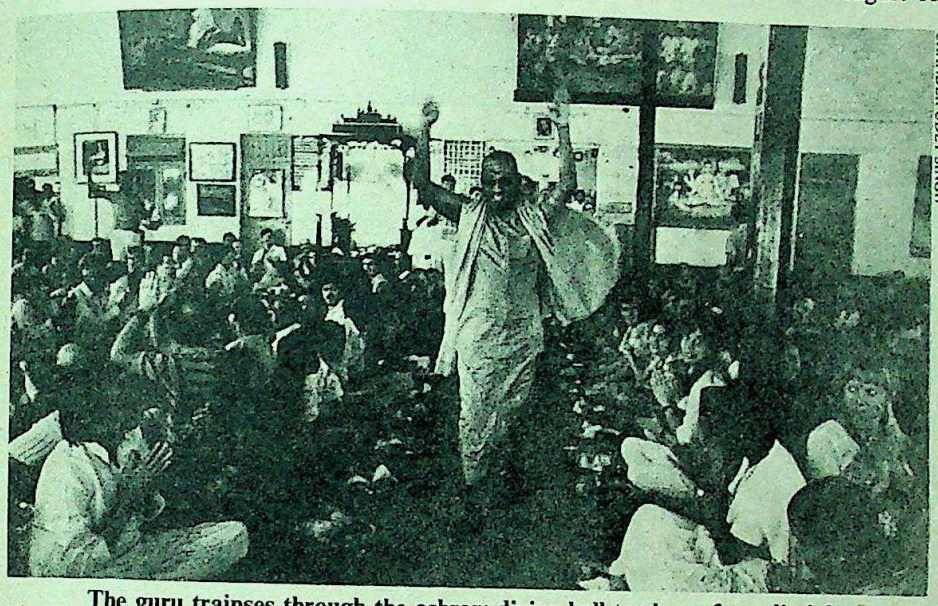
arat. But though extremely active for his the guru is a severe diabetic and his th is failing gradually. In 1978, shortly re he left for his last world tour, ktananda barely survived a massive heart ck which laid him out for almost a month Bombay's Nanavati Hospital.

At stake is a vast spiritual empire which monetary terms spans out at over Rs 100 world-wide. the acronym for Yoga Dham, its world headers at South berg in the Cats near New York grown in the de into a mutlion dollar spiriconglomerate h includes the acre South Falls- ashram, the 70- ashram at Ganuri, where it all an and huge buils and homes in Angeles, San nsisco, Boston, ndon, Melbourne, Adelaide among ers.

Even as the succ- ion issue is decided and finally ved through the elaborate ritual rowning a successor, growth plans ue unhindered—at Ganeshpuri a Rs 2 200-bed hospital is under construction rows of apartment houses for the des near completion. In Mehrauli, New a 12-acre ashram which will house 300 devotees is being built. In Melbourne, Muktananda plans to visit next year, ase plans for a new ashram site could SYDA up to $3 million (Rs 3 crore). Muktananda is vehemently opposed to wing and loans, huge cash reserves are hand at all times, and each branch of holds massive resources in bank de- and government securities, the only investments Muktananda allows. The Gurudev Siddhapeeth at Ganeshpuri alone has over Rs 3 crore in fixed deposits with banks and foundation headquarters at New York probably hold far greater sums. Said Forsythe: "I don't know the exact figures. but there's no doubt that it's a very big business." An industrialist trustee of the Ganeshpuri ashram describes it as a blue chip corporation.



CHANDER UDEY SINGH

The guru traipses through the ashram dining hall to cheers from disciples

Large Donations: Notwithstanding the huge monetary and commerical reserves which his ashrams have built up, Muktananda surprisingly enough uses none of the crudely extortionist fund-collecting methods of his rivals unlike Rajneesh. Guru darshan and his blessings, for anybody at all, come free. The ashrams charge no admittance, and meditation facilities, the presence of the guru and food come free. Even the monthly charge of roughly Rs 600 for foreign devotees who stay at the ashram is almost nominal since it includes a room and food.

The money is raised solely by donations which are not asked for, but no devotee goes away without making at least a token offering, which is a significant sum. The money collected goes into a huge blast-proof vault at Ganeshpuri. Reinforcing the safety of the deposits, armed guards holding semi-automatic rifles patrol the ashram compound at night. But security around the godman himself is amazingly lax. Muktananda preaches that a sadhu is public property, and he lives by this dictum.

Standard Biography: Like every well-known godman before him, Muktananda's past is a well kept secret. He was born near Dharmasthala in Mangalore in 1908. But his followers refuse to disclose his family background apart from the fact that his parents were immensely wealthy. The rest of the story as told by Muktananda himself, runs like a standard biography of a godman. He ran away from home at 15, wandered around the country for 24 years in search of god and *nirvana*, and finally came to Ganeshpuri, a village that had developed around the ashram of Nityanand.

On August 15, 1947, the story claims, Bhagwan Nityanand accepted him as a *chela* and gave him two small rooms to meditate and grow in. By 1961, when Nityanand died, the *chela* was already a force in India's teeming spiritual circles.

But it was not till his first foreign tour in 1970 that the growth ethic really caught on. Although it lasted only a little over three months, Muktananda promptly saw the huge potential of followers in the post-Beatles western world. Following up on paths already trod by gurus like Maharishi Mahesh, Muktananda began concentrating his energies well north of the Tropic of Cancer. In 1974 EST founder Werner Erhardt, who had joined Muktananda's band of devotees, offered to fund the guru on a prolonged world tour. Muktananda jumped at the offer, a two-and-a-half-year sojourn in the US resulted.

But Muktananda has become a victim of his own promotional hype. His followers today refuse to accept that he is merely an accomplished yogi, insisting that he is a godman who performs unique miracles for his disciples. The Ganeshpuri lore multiplies, fed by naive and sometimes inane additions by every new devotee; cancer patients cured by a touch or look, paralytics who jumps up and do the jig after a visit by Muktananda, inexhaustible food in the ashram kitchens.

Unlike the succession from Nityanand to Muktananda, however, the present succession involves a globe-girdling Rs 100-crore empire, and one that is so widely spread that it might prove impossible to control after Muktananda. But plans for the huge ceremony on May 8 go ahead, and Muktananda is determined to use the event as a springboard for his activities, both within the country and abroad which, in all probability, means another period of growth for religion's latest, 'blue chip corporation'.

—CHANDER UDAY SINGH

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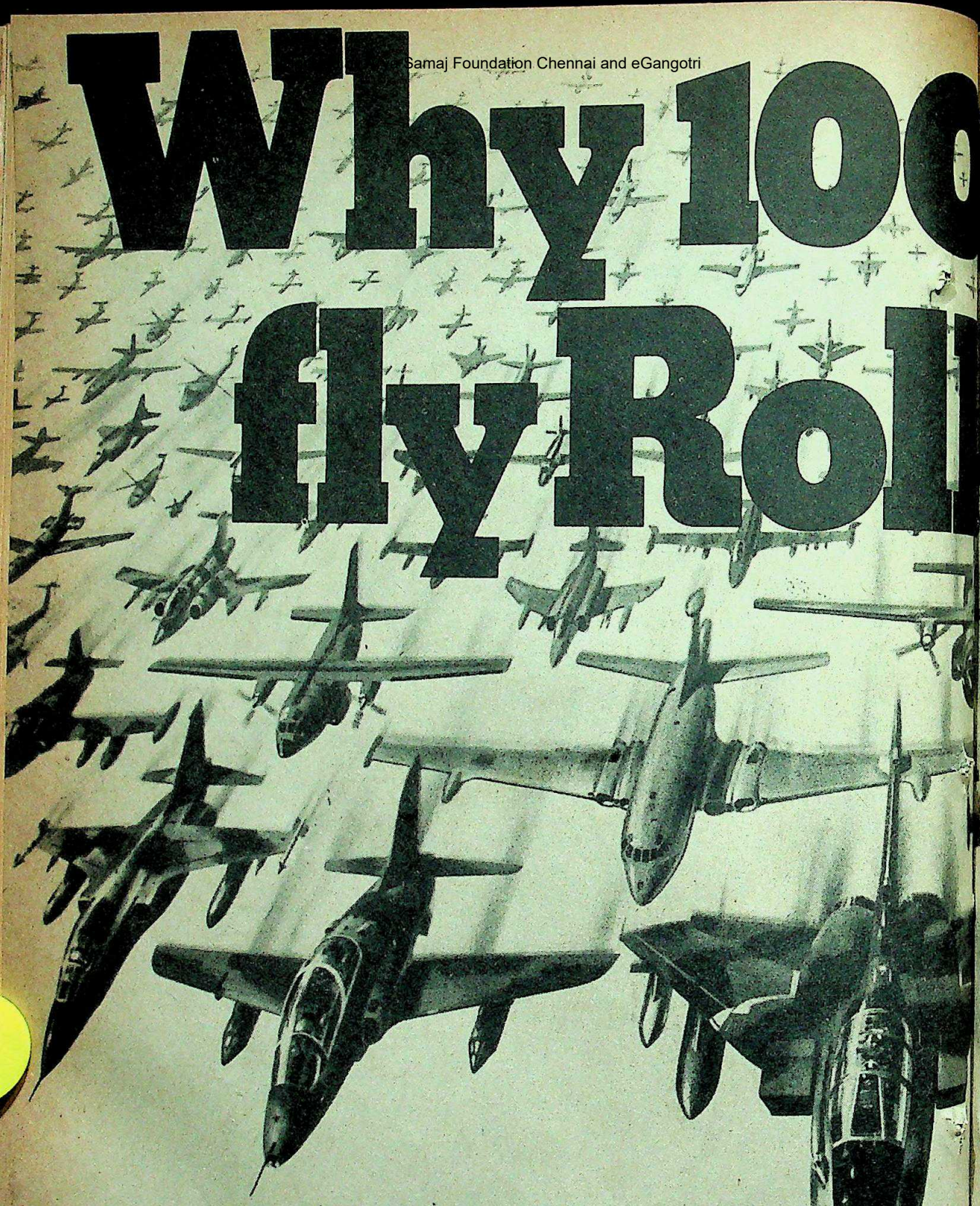

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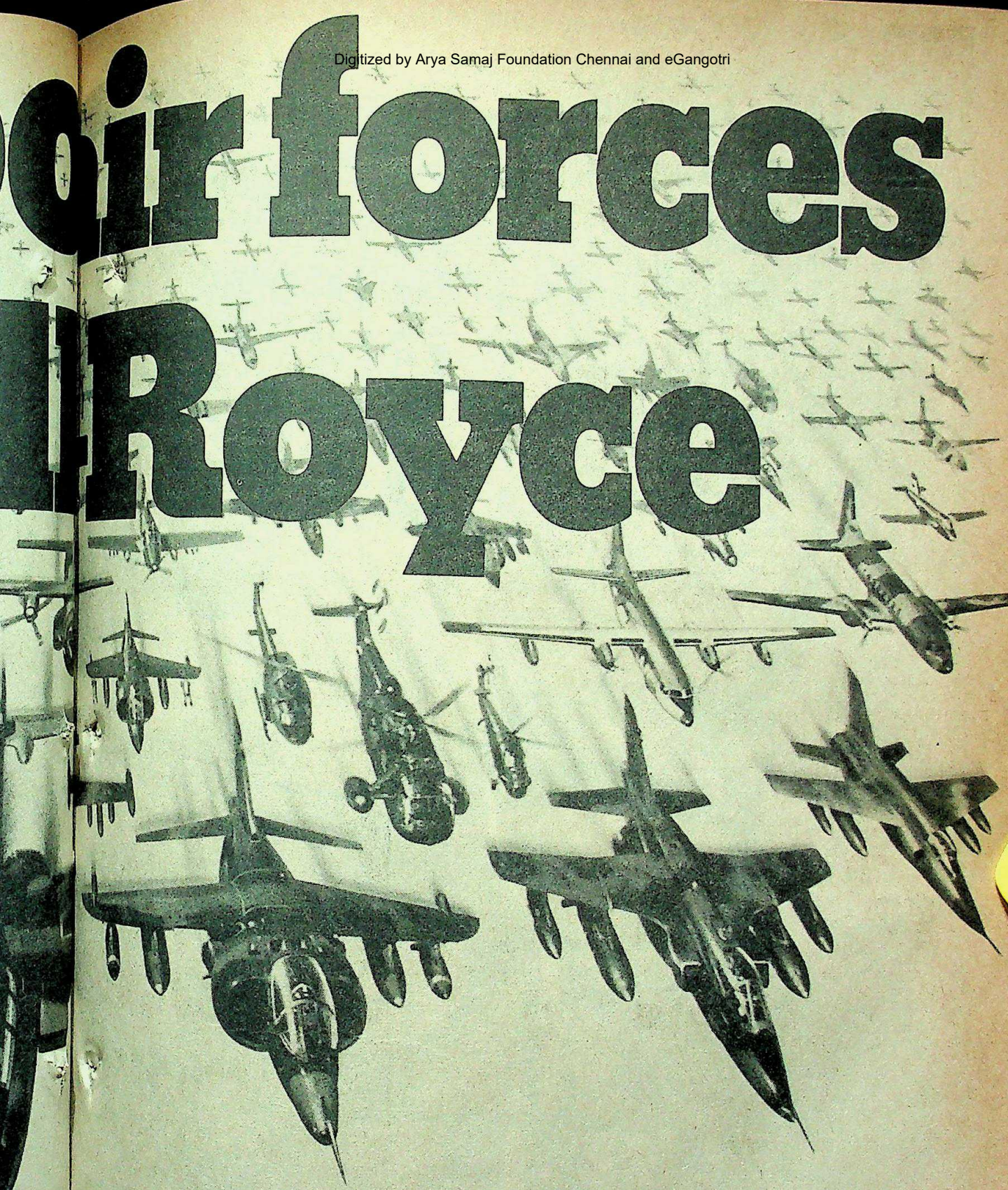

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STAYING AHEAD IN THE RACE TO TOMORROW.

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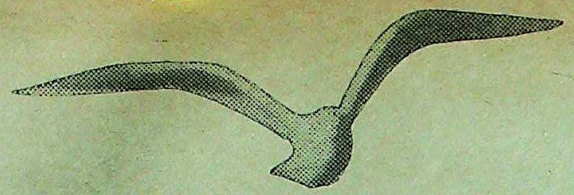

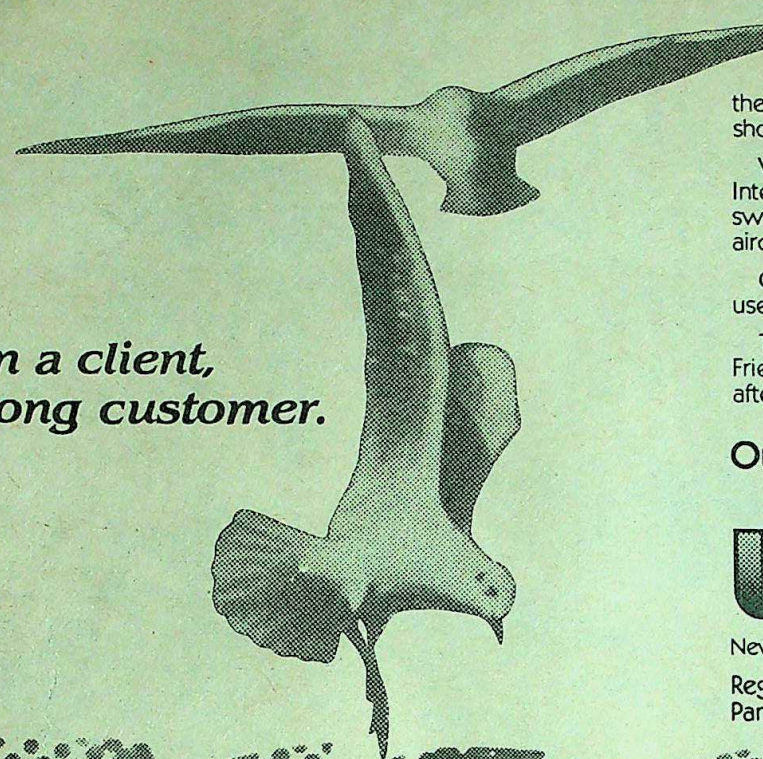

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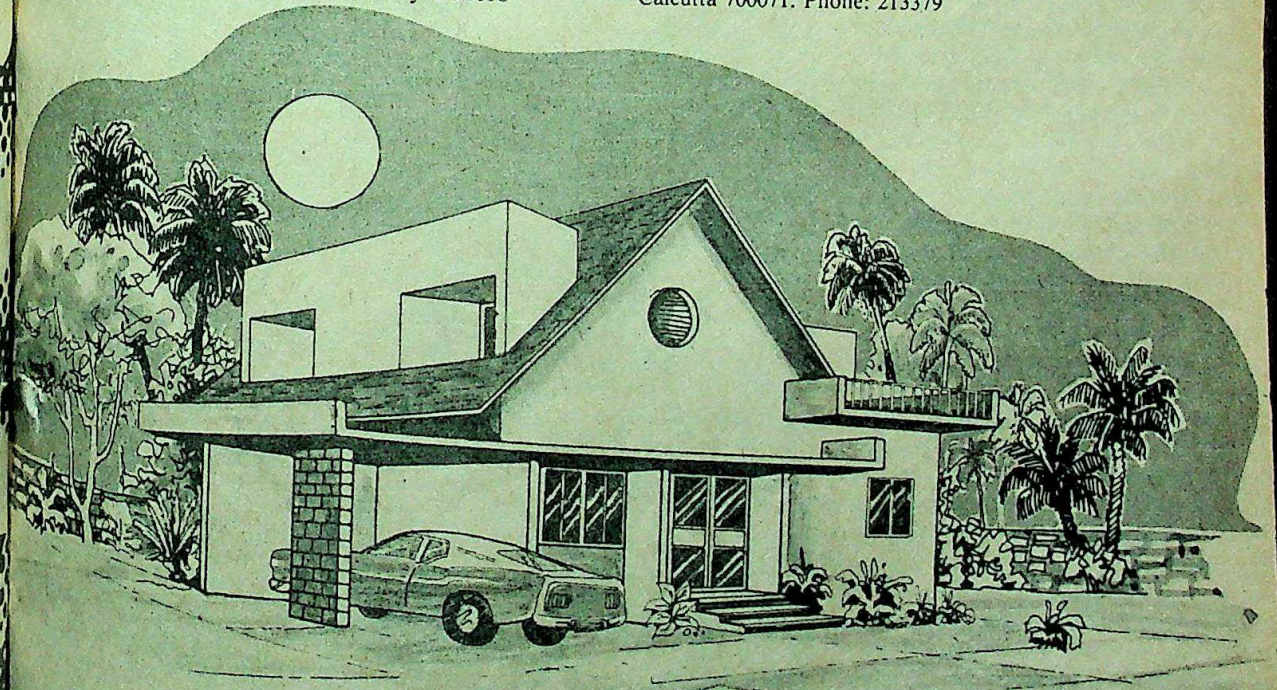

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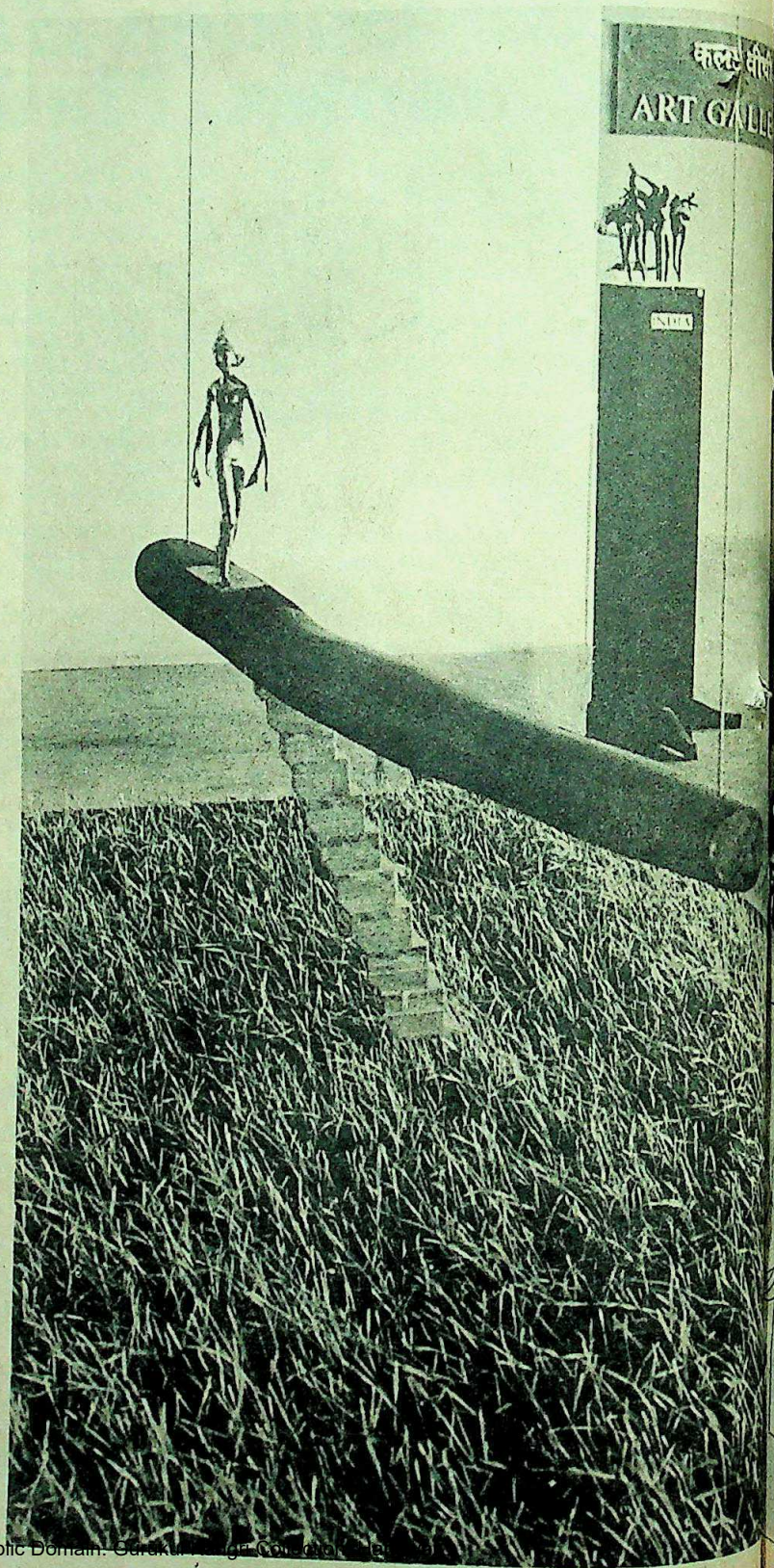
TRIENNALE

HUES AND CRIES

IT IS, in a way, to the world of art what a film festival is to the world of the cinema. The Fifth Triennale in India, an international exposition of contemporary art inaugurated by the President on March 15 in New Delhi, was scheduled to be held last year but delays of one kind and another led to two postponements. As the biggest art show sponsored by an Asian country, the Indian Triennale, officially backed by the Lalit Kala Akademi at a cost of Rs 15.5 lakh, this year is a show different from any of its predecessors.

For one, it is housed in a single, composite venue: the vast, barn-like, concrete-and-steel but picturesque space of Exhibition Hall Number 7 at Pragati Maidan. For another, a major Indian section of works by some 52 painters and sculptors is on display in a special, first-floor gallery: a plushly-carpeted, lavishly-lit space that, because it was made available rent-free by the Trade Fair Authority, was bagged by the host country. And finally, the collected body of works, numbering nearly a thousand with 76 countries participating, is the largest ever to be shown in an Indian Triennale—at the last there were only 868. Also for the first time the works of Indian artists living abroad, are being exhibited, "both to enhance the range of the representative character of the Indian section," the catalogue points out, "and to affirm our sense of solidarity and kinship with them." Viewers can consequently catch up with the recent works of Indian artists like Shakti Burman, S.H. Raza and Krishna Reddy all of whom live in Paris but rarely show in their native country. The Indian section, not only because it is the largest and gets preferential treatment in terms of space, is inevitably plagued by controversy of the usual kind: which Indian artists were invited and which left out amidst a welter of allegations of nepotism from opposing camps. Significantly, several established painters—among them Tyeb Mehta, Bikash Bhattacharjee and Satish Gujral—were showing their works; even Krishen Khanna, an earlier rebel had acquiesced by exhibiting one of his Biblical canvases. Said Khanna: "There are some good things in the Indian section and some bad. But most of the work is hung very badly, with hardly a painting shown to its best advantage. It doesn't seem to do anyone any good."



Ved Nayar's sculpture in the foyer of the Triennale: picturesque space

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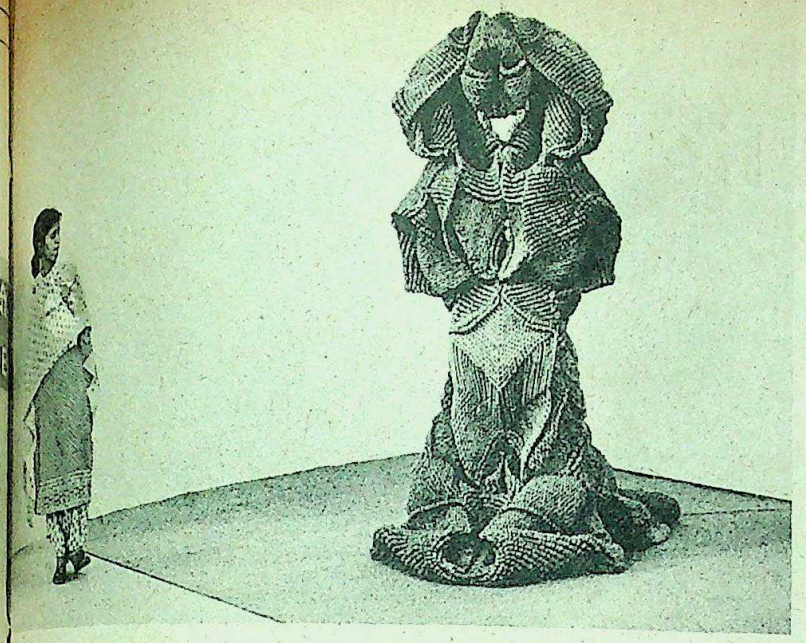

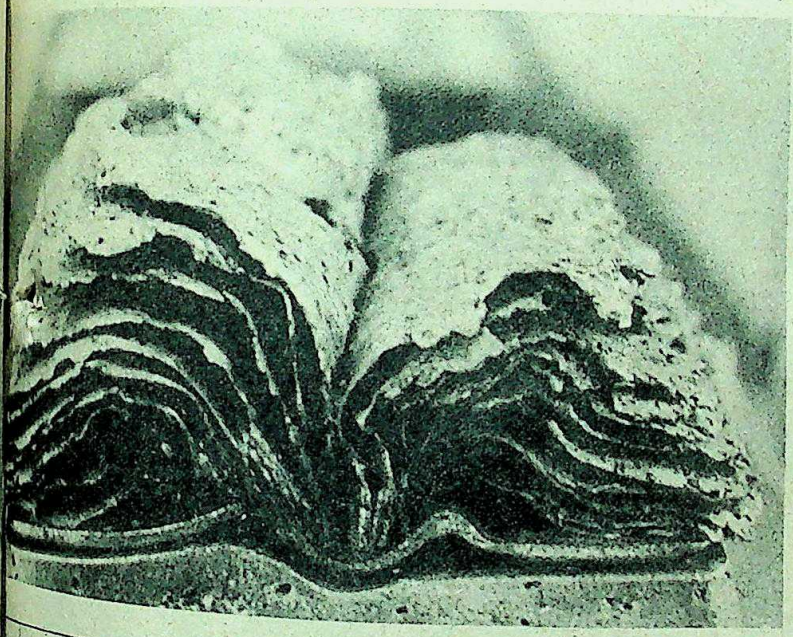

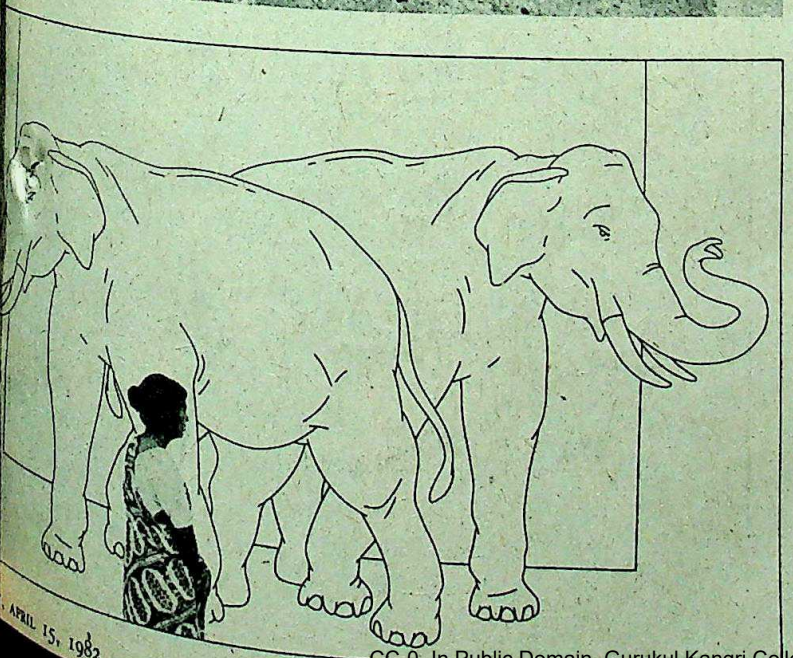

Confusion: Poor hanging was only one of the grouses. Organisation at several levels betrayed confusion and lack of planning. Not only was the final catalogue far from ready before the show's opening, the interim catalogue hurriedly put together betrayed serious errors: asterisks were put against entries to signify that they were not in competition when in fact they were and at least one foreign entry was hung upside down till an enlightened artist pointed out the mistake. Said Delhi painter Vasundhara Tiwari: "It's only once every three years that the Lalit Kala Akademi is given so much money to get an art show right, but there simply isn't the feeling of a big art show on. There aren't any banners in the city, no catalogue, and very little sense of something big happening."

Opinions on the Indian section, smaller than in the last Triennale, differed. As usual controversy erupted on the Delhi-Baroda axis, with the Baroda group of painters who had won much critical attention in their "Place for People" exhibition last year, conspicuously absent. Said a woman painter from Bombay who had not been invited: "The bulk of painters on show are from Delhi." Countered Delhi artist Rameshwar Broota who had two enormous canvases on display: "There's absolutely no reason for controversy. It's a well-conceived and serious show. As usual it's the publicity-hungry artists who grumble the loudest." Even so, younger painters like Nalini Malani, Sudhir Patwardhan and Vivan Sundaram were simply not considered; the pique this aroused was obvious when both Gieve Patel and Gulam Mohamed Sheikh turned down the invitation out of a sense of solidarity though neither made a public protest. In fact, the business of inviting painters for participation, as usual, provoked angry reactions. Said a painter who was never asked: "By inviting artists, and not scouting around for art as it is meant to, the Lalit Kala has reduced the whole exercise into a clash between personalities." Equally outspoken were reactions against the jury's selection of award-winners. Said painter Khanna, who is generally against awards: "If the motto of the Triennale is 'Art Unites' then I suppose its corollary should be 'And Awards Divide'. Surely the Lalit Kala can think of better ways to funnel money into artists' pockets other than awards that always arouse controversy."

Nevertheless there were some interesting new insights available in the Indian section: a set of bold, assertive canvases by Kiran Sethi; sculptor Dhruva Mistry's

Mrinalini Mukherjee's fibre sculpture (top), Takako Araki's Bible from Japan (centre) and Michael Craig-Martin's taped drawings: largest show ever

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startling naked figures in fibreglass; black-and-white etchings by Anupam Sud and a set of vivid, vibrant paintings by Manjit Bawa. But the section was not without a display of the gross and gimmicky: exceptional in its fusion of artistic pretension and class-conscious distortion was Delhi artist Sarojpal Gogi's assemblage: a collection of objects and paintings built around a fireplace depicting a whole wall in a middle class urban home.

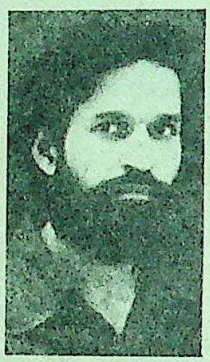
Amusing: Gimmickry of another kind, concerned with themes of contrived class-consciousness, was evident in the works of

There aren't any banners in the city, no catalogue, and very little sense of something big happening.
—TIWARI

West European and American artists whose forays into the avant garde offered much amusement to the ordinary Indian spectator. Tony Cragg, a British artist who travels the world with a sack in which he piles discarded garbage, then spreads the broken bits of plastic in shapes on the floor and walls, demonstrated, in the words of Professor Norbert Lynton who selected the British participants, "an art that is a criticism of all other art". A similar example of "installed art" was his compatriot Michael Craig-Martin's work which, on the four walls of an enclosed space, spelled out a profusion of objects of daily use (a torch, a tin opener, a clock, an ice-cube tray) in outlines of black and red adhesive tape. France's modernism was more exuberant in its swirling colour collages stuck on walls like ricepaper banners in some exotic Tibetan ritual. American artist Vernon Fisher, who also executed his work on the spot on four walls, integrated multiple images through photographic views of war, sentences out of fiction and childlike doodles and scrawls of people—but described it in heavy-handed jargon: "My art is... polymorphic, impure and eccentrically inclusive, relatively unsifted information."

The only two West European award-winners—of a total of eight selected by the three-man jury for the Rs 20,000 prizes payable in foreign exchange—were Spain and West Germany. Germany's Gotthard Graubner, the single representative, displayed tonal oil and acrylics on canvas mounted on large pieces of synthetic wadding. These, the catalogue explained, were works "in which man, confronted by art, experiences himself as part of nature". The effect in fact seemed the reverse: austere, synthetic and highly inorganic. Spanish artist Julian Casado created far more effective an impression through his geometric interpolations of colour and space.

Indeed, the only Europeans who stole the show from the western world were the East Europeans—Czech artist Jiri Anderle, an award-winner, displayed outstanding work in his pen, oil and collages on canvas.



There's absolutely no reason for controversy. It's a well-conceived and serious show.
—BROOTA

Using old photographs of soldiers as his reference—they were stuck in each corner of his canvases—the "conversion" from the original was a fascinating study of artistic progression and the artist's own predilections. From Japan came another kind of mirroring of the nation's past in contemporary art. Sculpture by Takako Araki wore the look of ruin and devastation. What she conveyed through her moth-eaten, half-buried and crumbling Bibles was not the holocaust of Hiroshima but the imperman-

ence of authoritarianism and for

Variable Standards: Some
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variable, from the abysmally
rivative (for example Banglades
and Nepal) to breakthroughs
achievements given their geograph
Significantly, two of the e
Iraq and Nigeria, and
former a worthier contender
have been found. Iraq's Saad
present in person at the Triennal
canvases, all desert sequences

If the motto of the Tri is 'Art then I s its coro should 'Award
—KHAN

granular textures, sandy colou
lyphics from ancient tablets a
dinary figures in outlines trave
backdrops of time and space.
of contemporary art in his
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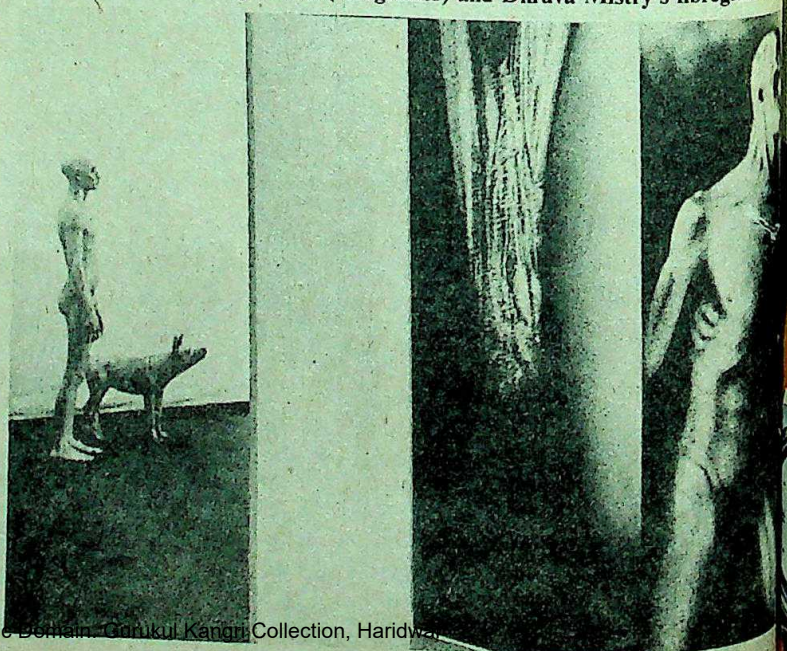
international juries have come t
Indian art shows that the nation
three jurors—Professor O.H.

Broota's brooding canvas (foreground) and Dhruva Mistry's fibreglass sc



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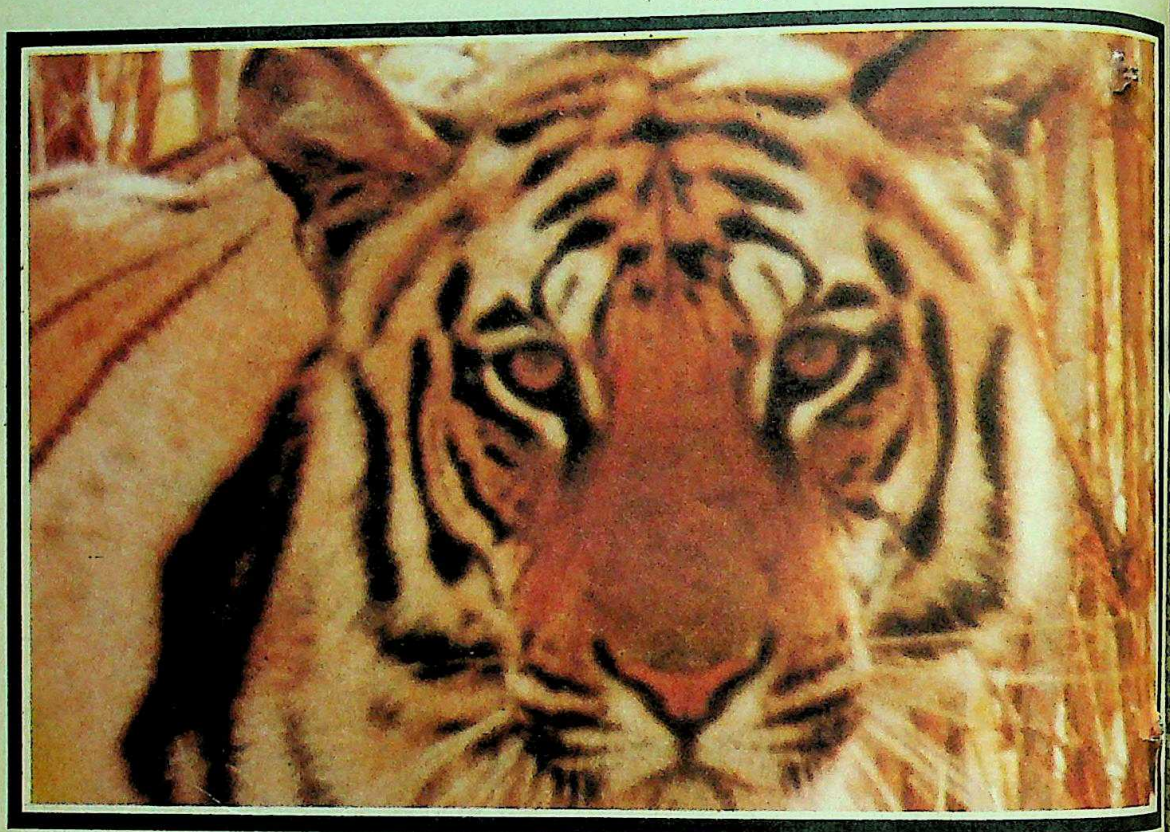
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?"

—*The Tiger, William Blake*



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Suggested tourist circuit— Khajuraho–Bandhavgarh.

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ermany, Dr Vitali S. Manin from the Union and Professor Sankho ri from India—were reflected in to an artist each from their own es. A large display of art from the Union supplied a conservative but range of artistic development, though rks of the award-winner Alexander ov, in his mid, surreal canvases was debatable in comparison to other e work from the USSR. Indian artist Prakash, whose finely-executed, pale- l explorations of the nature of light, attracted attention by their departure from routine was an entirely commendable choice.

On the whole, the efforts of the Triennale, late in coming together but laboriously put together by art critic Richard Bartholomew who is presently secretary of the Lalit Kala Akademi, did come off; though, as even certain enlightened foreign artists admitted, its complete potential as the only show-window for international art in Asia was far from realised. Having lost one year already, the next Triennale is not due till 1984, and Bartholomew suggests that a permanent cell be set up to properly institutionalise and organise the massive exercise. Even now, there were countless confusions such as foreign artists leaving before the show officially began because they were not given advance notice. And what Australian painter Fred Cress said of Indian contemporary art in general seemed applicable to the whole show: "The standards were high, the range tremendous, but there was nothing to set one's teeth on edge or shake one up thoroughly. It's all too polite."

—SUNIL SETHI

ATIONAL EXHIBITION

ediocre Fare

IKE in many previous years, the National Exhibition did not become the exhibition India could proudly off to the contemporary inter- ional scene. Richard Bartholomew, retary of the Lalit Kala Akademi, de no bones when he said: "In the last 12 years senior artists have not con- ered it important enough to parti- ate. From my point of view a lot of ntemporary Indian art doesn't hang ether, so by inviting senior artists we give it purpose and shape." This "collection" which was comprised of six works was however too small to the mediocre standard of some 322 bits by 309 artists. Even among the rd winners, Manu Parekh's work, due for recognition, was the sole bit to tower above others in style, tion and content.

Wandering through the Rabindra van galleries there was much disap- ment. Among the discontented ar- there was also much gossip and der. The jury for the National ards was blamed for nepotism which, year, had been apparently too blatant side. Said a visiting artist who was to the post-Awards' booze binge the jury and the purchase committee: made open bargains for favours f. In short, the result was that e other years, the Awards went out der artists at the decline of their ers—not so much to young artists promise.

Contention: Another bone of con- on among rejected artists and the was the fact that works by jury ers had been selected for display. It later explained that the jury's works under a second 'invited' category to the embarrassment of selecting other's work. This privilege became more objectionable once the purchase committee came into action and bought the works. An insider explained that people were keen to please each other because it helped to win votes. .

Of the paintings, young Jagdish Chander's canvas 'Strike II' showed a technical mastery that few others matched. The graphics and drawings section was more impressive. Bishan Kumar's etching with its comment on the population avalanche, on the futility of war and destruction was a mature and controlled rendering. Devraj Dakoji's boulders were refreshing in colour and weighed less on the eye. Dushyant Singh's fine pencil drawing of an old Rajput disillusioned by politics came through even to the less initiated. Jai Zharotia's silk screen of a horse rider leaping to a crescent moon continued his simple fantasy forays.

Unrewarded Exhibits: Among the sculptures, there were others more original and striking than those honoured with the National Award. The intimacy in Tripti Patel's brass sculpture entitled 'Relationship' was expressed in great simplicity, with the placing of a hand on the shoulder holding together otherwise separate pieces. P.R. Daroz's floral ceramic forms with stamens were innovative and so also was the granite horse head by Sunil Vishen which was linked to its neck with brass pipes, its strong nostrils breathing country air.

Outside the National Exhibition, the Kala Mela (Art Fair) at Bahawalpur House was more *mela* than *kala*. Self-proclaimed masters with great pretensions about their work—much of which had been rejected from the National Exhibition—rallied together in their lost cause demanding and protesting that their work was not being bought by the Akademi officials. For the Akademi, which hopefully knows better, it was a hard choice.

—AMAN NATH

SC JAIN

The National Exhibition: wide-ranging display

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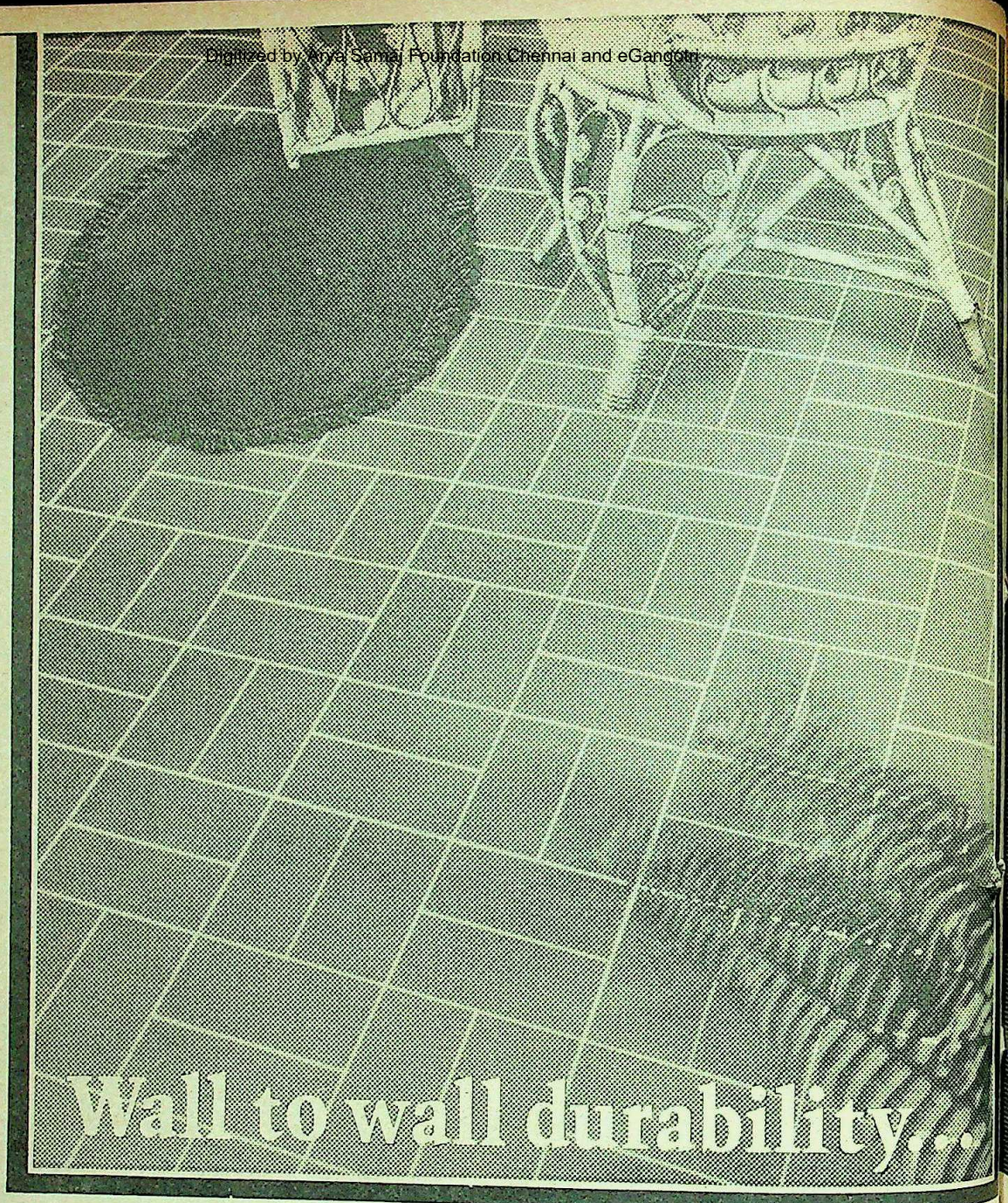

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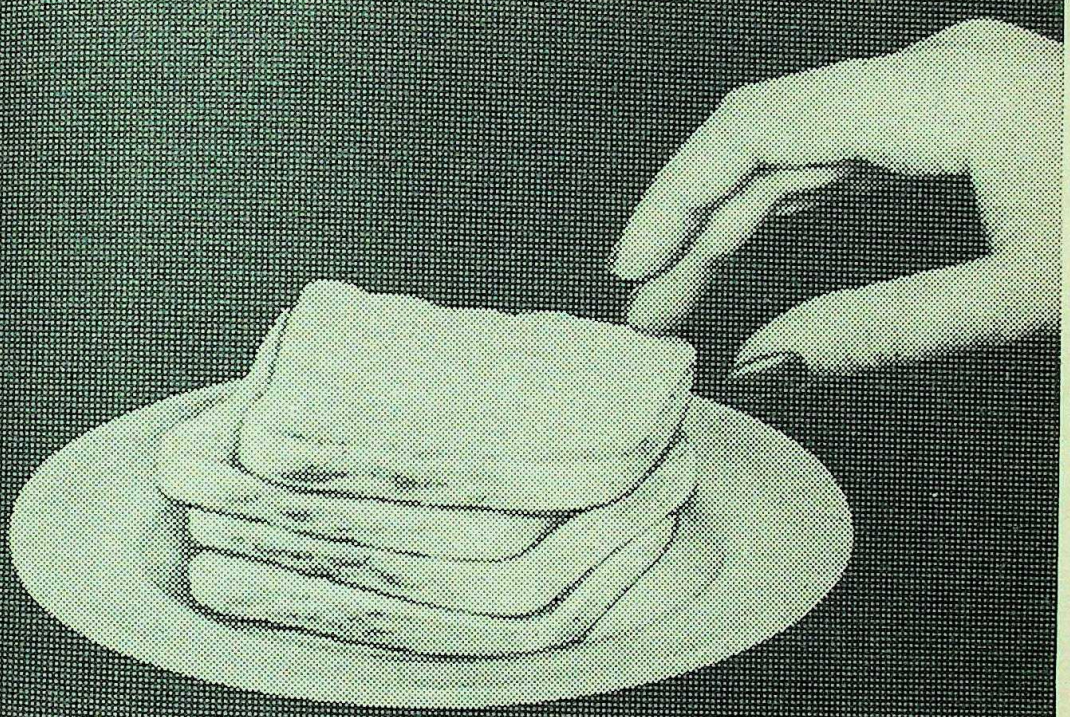

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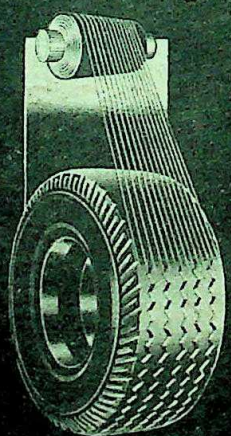

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aking Telugus Tick

VS verses are a must for anyone learning Telugu and the aphorisms in his writings are even on the lips of erates. Despite this pervasive in- the books and life of the immortal poet are unknown for want of suf- historical data. Yet peasant-poet remembered specially by the five- Jayanti (500th birth anniversary) ations which began on March 15, has a new wave of cultural conscious- Andhra Pradesh. Such is the fervour artist's impression of how Potana have looked, painstakingly done by Pulli Seshagiri Rao, is already on and calendars.

five-day cultural fes- showed how makes the tick. His opus, the ha, or tra- as some figures ar- the Sanskrit Bhagavath- great Hindu Telugu for as the dhra Maha am con- endear him people by its lucidity. Inaugurating the celeb- at the historic town of Warangal, Potana lived, Vice-President M. Ansari remarked: "Translations are looked upon as being only an attempt replace an original but this is not so. Many translations give their own art. Referring to Potana, the vice- quoted Keats: "Read him once, can read no more, for all books also seem, so poor."

Potana's portrait

Telugu classics are most familiar th- the regional language versions like Ramayana in Tamil. Apart from Telugu and Sanskrit and the tailed episodes like the *Gajendra Prahlada charitam*, and *Rukmini* in the *Bhagavatham*, Potana st- distinctive chord in the hearts of the the simplicity of his language. Says Nanduri Ramakrishna: "For one epic in the classical style, Potana's words is strikingly simple. This is neo-literates can repeat a couple of by rote." *Veerabhadra Vijayam*, Satakam and *Bhoginee Dandakam* Potana's poetical works but the *Maha Bhagavatham* is the best known. *Veerabhadra Vijayam* as the name indicates is about the victory of Veerabhadrata the son of Siva, while *Narayana Satakam* is a collection of one hundred verses in praise of Narayana. *Bhoginee Dandakam* is Potana's only romantic composition about the affairs of a king and a courtesan. Writers speculate as to why only eight of the twelve *skandhas* (chapters) of the *Bhagavatham* were written by Potana while the fifth was by Bopparaju Ganganna, the sixth by Ercheri Singana and the eleventh and twelfth by Velindendla Narya, all Potana's disciples.

Controversy as to whether his birthplace was Bommera, 45 km from Warangal, or another place in Cuddapah district is over but the exact years in which he lived is still a matter of surmise. Scholar Diwakarla Venkatavadhani feels Potana was born around 1430 and lived till the end of the century. But one of the secretaries of the festival, K. Suprasannacharya says: "Potana's diction and devotion overrides all debates and controversies."

Festive Gathering: So over the five days writers, dramatists, poets, dancers, musicians and others took the stage to explain the impact and gauge the influence of Potana and his *Bhagavatham* on Indian arts, philosophy and contemporary society. Swami Ranganathananda, Telugu poet laureate Dasarathi, Nataraja Ramakrishna, Vedantham Satyanarayana Sarma, M. Balamuralikrishna, Dr C. Narayana Reddi and Yela Venkateswara Rao came to pay tribute to the devotional poet. Even before this began Bommera turned festive because a Potana memorial there for which the foundation was laid way back in 1957 by Lok Sabha speaker M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar was at last completed.

Now a Rs 50-lakh cultural complex is to come up at the Warangal festival venue on a five-acre site overlooking a lake. But Hidayatullah is not the first to unveil a foundation plaque for the complex. J. Vengala Rao did so during his tenure as chief minister when local patriotism ran high and Warangal residents decided to go ahead on their own steam. The new plans are being worked out by a state-level committee and with the member of Parliament from the area being External Affairs Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, a linguist and art lover himself, the foundation for the complex is on firmer ground. Said Rao: "Potana does not belong to the people of Warangal alone nor of Andhra Pradesh but is part of the country's cultural heritage."

—AMARNATH K. MENON in Warangal

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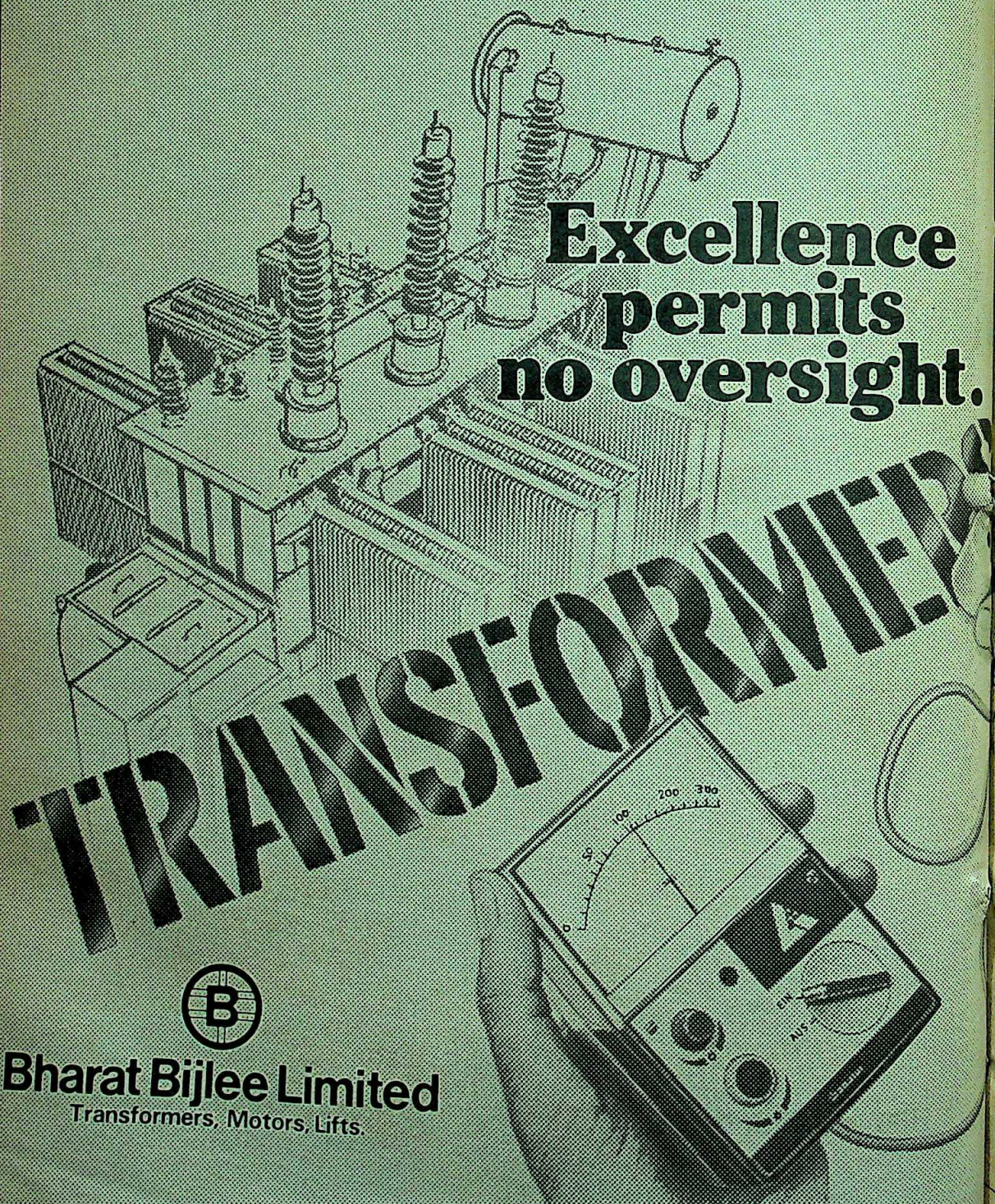

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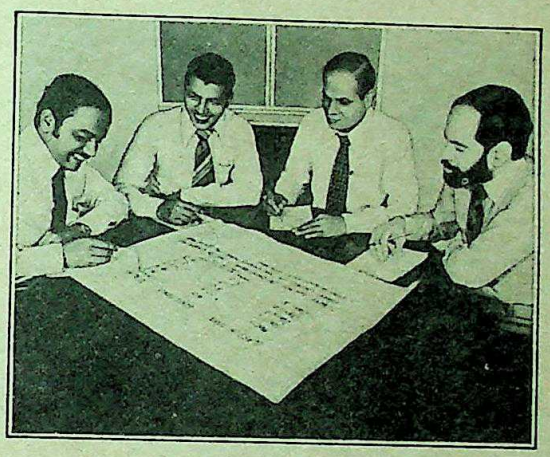

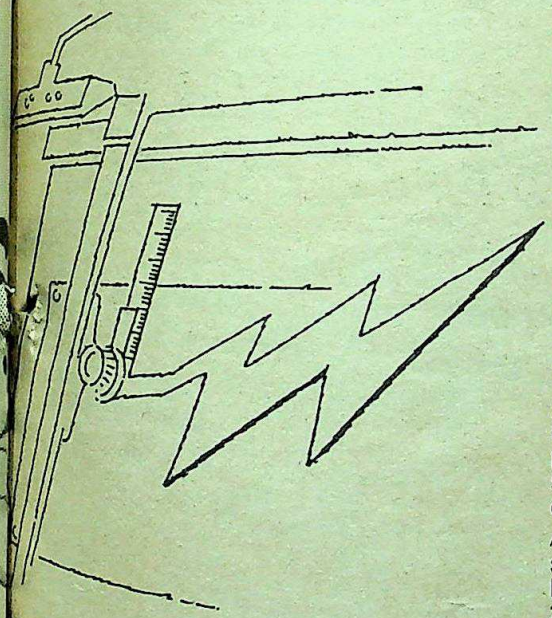

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■ From a runaway to cart-puller to peon to successful free-lance journalist, that is the story of **Swami Trivedi**, 28, who bounced onto the stage of New Delhi's Mavalankar Auditorium last fortnight, to receive the People's Union for Civil Liberties-INDIA TODAY "Journalism for Human Rights Award". Trivedi, bespectacled and unassuming, had spent a tense fortnight in Chhattarpur, Madhya Pradesh, along with photographer Jagdish Yadav, last year, delving into the shameful tale of 13 prisoners tortured by the police into physical impotence.

The award and the Rs 20,000 that went with it will be a welcome windfall for a man who has clawed his way out of poverty through sheer hard work. Married at 14, Trivedi ran away from home —Padaraiya Kalan (population: 1,000) in Panna district, Madhya Pradesh— when he was 19, and worked for a while in Jabalpur as a cart-puller. His cart brought him to the home of the managing editor of the daily *Navbharat*, a job in its printing press, and 18 hours of hard work every day which included acting as stenographer for the paper's Editor K.P. Dixit in the journalism department of Jabalpur University. Quipped he: "That's how I improved my language."

A bachelor of arts degree followed, along with a diploma in journalism. Trivedi started a weekly *Shaitan* along with Dixit, but it folded up in a few months. He got his big break when the Hindi weekly *Ravivar* accepted his painstakingly investigative stories on the human condition, and knew he had reached the top when *Ravivars'* sister publication *Sunday* accepted his Chhattarpur investigation. The award and the money that this brought him cannot but sharpen Trivedi's journalistic eye sight.

Trivedi: writing the wrong

Rajesh (left) and Dimple: back to square one

■ What does a bored, rich, beautiful housewife do for kicks? Takes up a career in films, of course. **Dimple Khanna** (nee Kapadia), the footloose wife of one-time superstar **Rajesh Khanna** seems to have finally bid goodbye to her temperamental 'kaka'. Last fortnight, Dimple moved to her parents' residence, for the nth time in the last two years, and filed a divorce suit against Khanna—this time for good. The couple's marriage has been on the rocks for sometime although both have periodically attempted to make up. Hankering to resume her film career—she became an overnight sensation for her role in the box-office bonanza *Bobby*—Dimple has been playing the idle-rich and ignored wife for too long. Hubby Rajesh's attitude of "a wife's place is at home" didn't help matters either. But this time round Dimple means business. She is making an attempt to step back into the limelight of the silver screen on the crutches of her one-film fame. And while the svelte lady's been adding extra layers to her once shapely midriff, the Bombay film world has added a competitive string of nymphets to its rolls. Dimple will find that getting into movies is not so simple.

■ In a dramatic departure from her earlier erotic writings, plump, crinkly-haired **Kamala Das**, 49, has switched over to patronising a children's film movement in Kerala but her initial forays have been disastrous. To raise money for the cause, she roped in **Hema Malini** last fortnight, for a dance recital in Trivandrum. Before condescending to accept the invitation, Malini insisted on certain conditions. She demanded accommodation at the ITDC's Kovalam hotel and that a press conference be arranged.

The dance recital at the city's Tagore Theatre was financially a disaster with more complimentary tickets [illegible] sales. Das who is [illegible] with the need to help [illegible] ren" became sadde[illegible] was handed the as[illegible] hotel bills of Mal[illegible] accompanying [illegible] Apart from dishing [illegible] 25,000 as Mali[illegible] Das had to shell ou[illegible] for Malini's brother [illegible] Chakravarthy's bo[illegible] approximately Rs [illegible] hotel bill. And to a[illegible] chagrin, Malini and [illegible] complained about [illegible] air-conditioned dres[illegible] at the theatre, and [illegible] dience turn-out. Sa[illegible] Das: "To pacify the[illegible] present Hema with [illegible] that I had kept fo[illegible] Zia's wife for my fo[illegible] trip to Pakistan."

Das (left) and Malini: costly prospect

SIGN PO[illegible]

■ **Died:** Achar[illegible] Kripalani, 96, Gandhian and freed[illegible] of a cardiac [illegible] Ahmedabad. He spe[illegible] part of his life in t[illegible] organisational ba[illegible] Congress moveme[illegible] tional independenc[illegible] rest of his time wa[illegible] the fashioning of a[illegible] to the very sam[illegible] Party. After his lon[illegible] ful association with[illegible] Gandhi, Kripalani [illegible] neral secretary of th[illegible] Party, his term exte[illegible] 1934 to 1946. He [illegible] president of the par[illegible] while. Later, his [illegible] with Jawaharlal [illegible] Vallabhbhai Patel [illegible] to quit the Congre[illegible] join the Jayaprak[illegible] movement.

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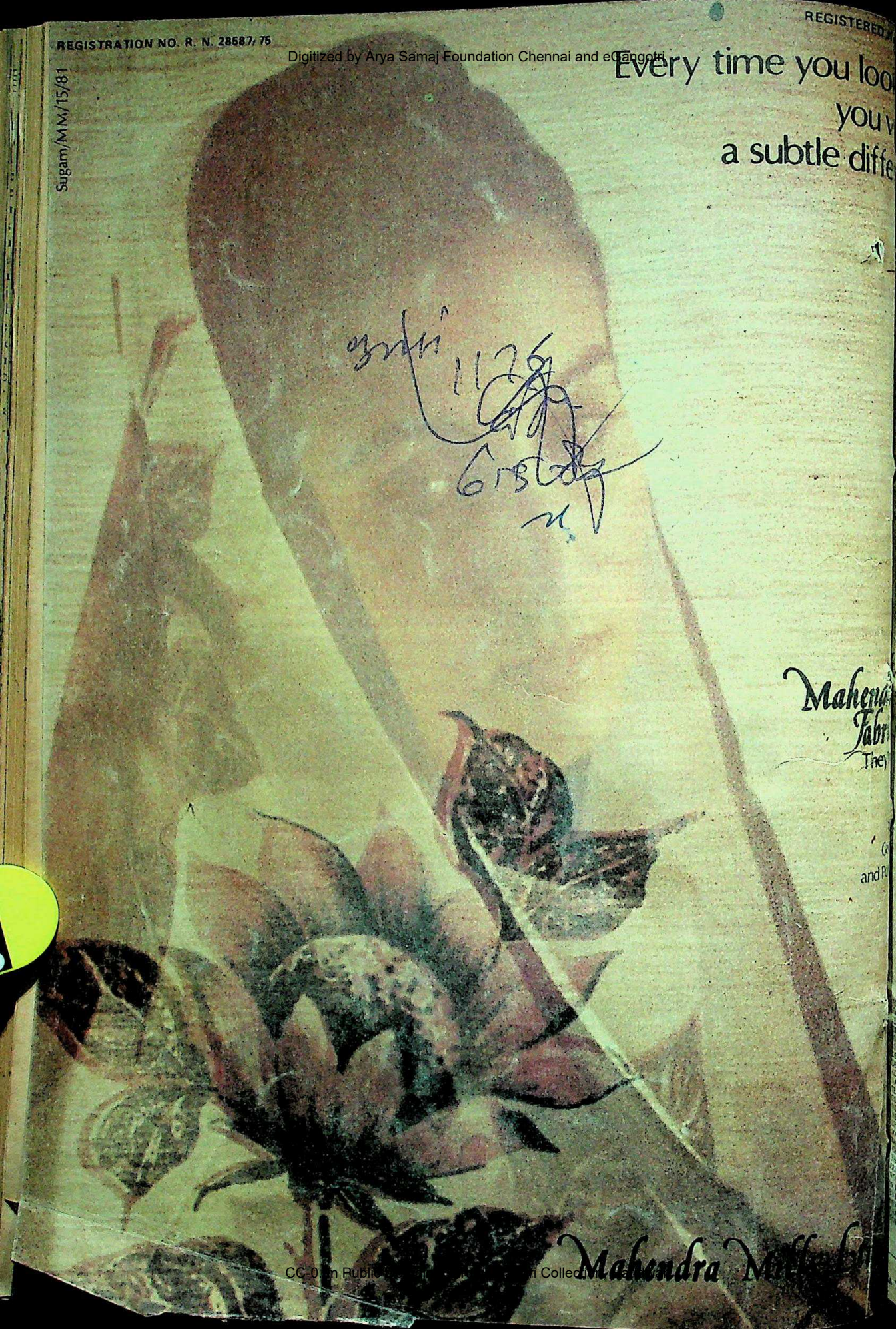

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THERE are, said the poet Wallace Stevens, 13 ways of looking at a blackbird. The essence of that particular truth came home forcefully last fortnight as the contretemps in the Gandhi household reached a flashpoint and spilt uglily to public attention. All at once there were as many versions of the event as there were participants, and gossip spread like wildfire about the unsavoury affair which was in the nature of a not uncommon family dispute but with ominous political overtones. INDIA TODAY *does not normally accord importance to what it sees to be people's private lives, but the contentious Maneka Gandhi affair clearly had dimensions of public importance.* INDIA TODAY *decided to write a profile of the woman in the centre of the storm, Maneka Gandhi, who broke with more than one tradition when she drove out of 1, Safdarjung Road.*

For all the limelight that has shone on her, however, Maneka was no easy figure to pin down. For all that one person was prepared to say about her, there was another to proclaim the opposite. She herself, while unrestrained in private conversation or even at press conferences, not to speak of two leisurely photo sessions with Picture Editor RAGHU RAI, *steadfastly refused to give a formal interview. "I will when I have done something positive," she told Correspondent* SUNIL SETHI *confidently during several hours of off-the-record conversations. Sethi met with complete silence when he attempted to approach 1, Safdarjung Road for the other side's views. Yet there was no dearth of other people volunteering "information" and views unreservedly. "It seems that everybody in town has taken sides," said Sethi at the end of a week of monitoring the divergent viewpoints in both camps.*

The Gandhi family wasn't the only one pictured in less than desirable light last fortnight. In what might in retrospect be a juicy corollary to the Gandhi affair, mother and son of the former royal family of Gwalior, the Scindias, took their ongoing battle a dramatic stage further. What made the Gwalior dispute significant was the involvement of some members of the Gwalior entourage in the sale of Surya *magazine in February which was something of a curtain-raiser on the Maneka affair. Correspondent* CHAITANYA KALBAG, *who covered the* Surya *sale, flew down to Gwalior with Photographer* BHAWAN SINGH *to find that skeletons in the Scindia and Gandhi households have a surprisingly similar rattle.*

SECRETS of another kind were also being bared last fortnight. Hard on the heels of his investigation into mail interception in the capital, Correspondent PRABHU CHAWLA *winged his way to Bhubaneswar to discover that successive Orissa governments have been steaming open the letters of their perceived political opponents. It is a sad comment on the system that in spite of repeated exposure, and a petition given to the Lok Sabha speaker last fortnight, the practice continues unchecked.*

Last fortnight INDIA TODAY *took on board Business Editor* T.N. NINAN, *who moves over from the* Business Standard, *of the Calcutta-based* Ananda Bazar Patrika *Group. Ninan, 32, will join Economics Editor* JAY DUBASHI *in giving* INDIA TODAY *readers a more complete reportage of business and economic developments.*

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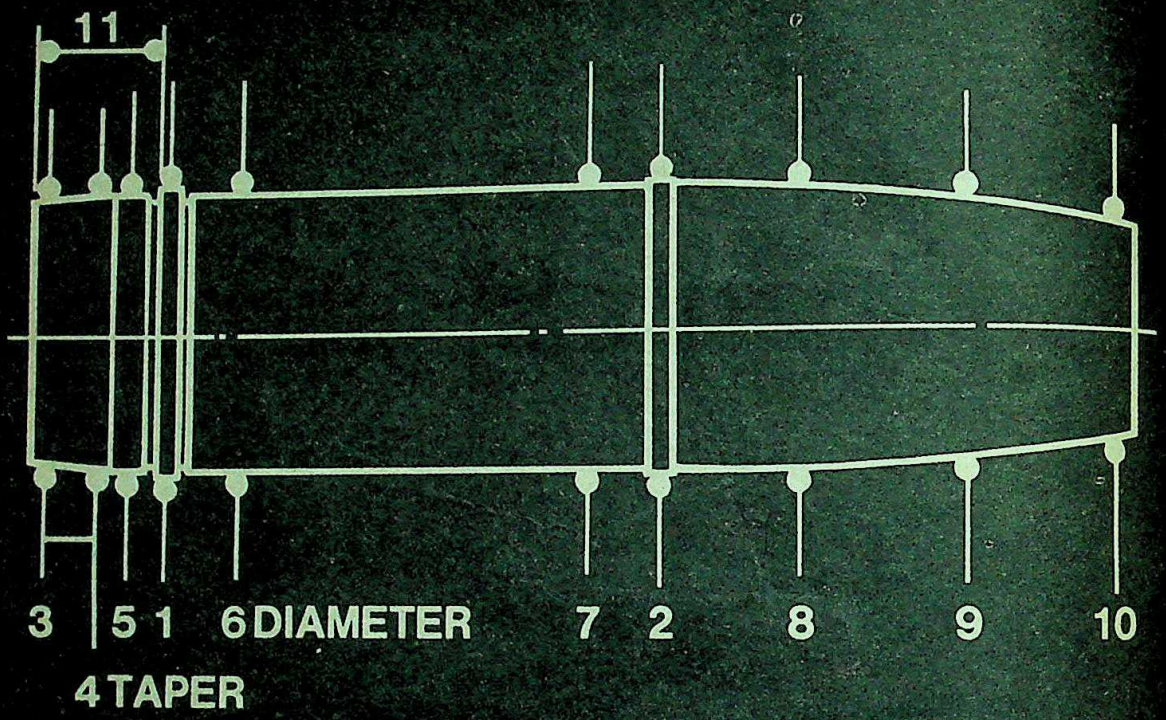

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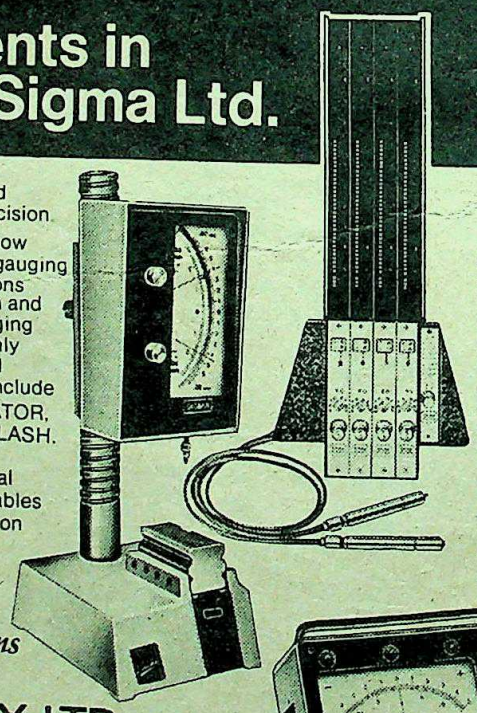

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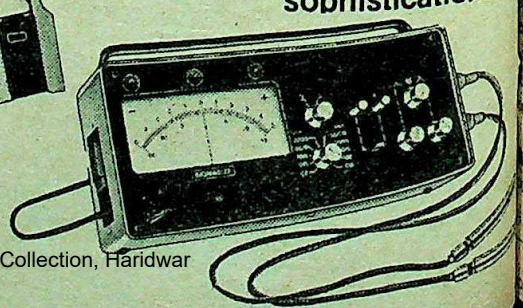

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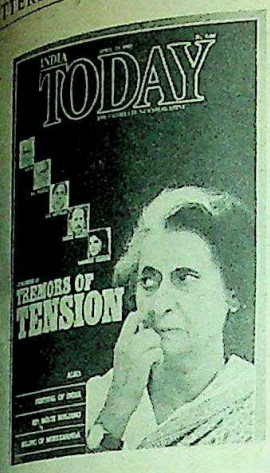

FORE THE STORM

Disasters often cast their shadows be-
e them. Mrs Gandhi should pay attention
these "Tremors Of Tension" (April 15)
fore the volcano erupts. The Congress(I) is
mering with discontent—the Maneka
sode is just a straw in the wind—and the
me minister must put her house in order.
w Delhi *Angraj Mohan*

Does Maneka Gandhi realise what a
acherous path she is treading? Akbar
hmed has shrewdly roped in the best
rson as his political springboard—the
me minister's daughter-in-law. Let us
pe that saner counsels prevail on Maneka.
mbay *R.K. Purayil*

OSMETIC CHANGES

Shifting the focus from the dull political
enario to "The Beauty Boom" (March 31)
s novel and welcome. But when it is
itten that "irrespective of whether they get
o square meals or not, women will use
smetics," the author goes too far.
hanesw ar *M.A. Ahad*

The difference in the cosmetic industry
the '70s and the '80s is that in the '70s
e industry manufactured products accord-
g to the needs of the market. Now the
dustry first creates the need and then
ovides the products.
angere *P.R. Suresh*

When food additives and drugs are not
ject to extensive toxicity tests, I am
ptical to read that ingredients used by the
smetic industry are tested for safety.
xicological studies to be meaningful in-
ve years of study and a substantial mo-
ary outlay. And yet, your study reveals
manufacture of cosmetics is a low invest-
nt industry.
mbay *N.G. Wagle*

When a woman applies eye make-up,
es she know that countless rabbits have been blinded in toxicity tests so that her eyes will not be harmed?
Delhi *Avinash Kothari*

■ Since when have jungles started reverberating from radios? Your "t"s were crossed and the "i"s were dotted but a full stop was overlooked making the sentence run for twelve lines and sound disjointed.
Madras *S. Subbiah*

■ I find that some information concerning M/s Dabur Industries is incorrect. They do not own 22 acres land in the industrial estate outside Delhi but have leased 19.5 acres in Industrial Area, Sahibabad, Site No. IV, Ghaziabad.
Kanpur *Sharad Kapoor*

■ It is incorrectly stated that "Dermacare—yet another brand floated by Shamser Singh, proprietor of the once famous Sahib Singh chain of chemist shops disappeared". Dermacare is in the market as our product with the same patent and formula, as we purchased the same for a valuable consideration from the auction held by the Sheriff, High Court, Calcutta.
Calcutta *B. Sethia*
Director
Vikson & Vikson Ltd.

COLD COMFORT

The special feature "Operation Gangotri" (March 31) on the Indian expedition to Antarctica was extremely enlightening. It gave an insight into the real nature, the importance and the politics involved in the expedition of which so little was known to most Indians. The colour photographs were equally impressive.
Madurai *Suresh Chandrasekaran*

■ The leader of the expedition was Dr Sayed Zahoor Qasim (secretary, Department of Environment) and not Dr S.L. Qasim as stated in the article.
Gorakhpur *B.A. Ansari*

■ The expedition was another feather in our cap. Who says India hasn't developed? The criticism in the foreign media was because they are unable to bear India's success. Moreover, I had been looking for the detailed story since the expedition hit the news—only INDIA TODAY gave it to me.
New Delhi *Aroon Gurung*

■ The thunder of Operation Gangotri is stolen by what you called a "suicidal gamble". An expedition calls for adventure, but never a desperate rush. The captain of the *Polar Circle* was absolutely within his rights. He was responsible for the safety of the ship and for the members of the team. To misguide him by giving wrong information was an act which should be condemned.
Bombay *Sudip D. Bhaumik*

CRUSADING SPIRIT

It is heartening to note that INDIA TODAY has taken up the cause of the downtrodden millions in India ("Of Inhuman Bondage", March 31). The argument of the director of NIN, Hyderabad reflects the total lack of concern for current national and local affairs. More enamoured with space flights and polar expeditions, I suppose!
Bombay *M.S. Fonseca*

■ The special report brings to light the agony of the bonded labourers. The sheer callousness of the Madhya Pradesh Government is unparalleled. More irrigation and land distribution will not emancipate these slaves. Only legislation, if rigidly enforced, can put an end to their misery.
Naihati *Pankaj Adhikari*

ERROR LAMENTED

There is a mistake in the caption in "Lament For Lebanon" (March 31). The picture on the right was titled Madi: under fire. The man pictured is Bashir Gemayal.
Madras *Raghunathan D.*

SHELL SHOCK

"Massacre At Digha" (March 31) described tortoises as mammals. This reminds me of a *Times of India* editorial on dolphins used for espionage work in which they were called birds and an *Indian Express* story calling malaria spreading mosquito plasmodium falciparum. Tortoises are actually reptiles; dolphins are mammals and plasmodium falciparum are the germs that cause cerebral malaria. I marvel at the reporting on scientific issues in the Indian press.
Lucknow *Dr Zaka Imam*

■ The report on the massacre of turtles at Digha, made lugubrious reading. This magazine has become a mouth piece of ecological and wildlife experts and their desperate bids to try and educate the people.
Mangalore *P.M. Carriappa*

A LACK OF CIVILITY

The case of "The Uncivil Servant" (March 31) is noteworthy for two facts. A corrupt government has had the last laugh by getting rid of an inconvenient officer, who had the courage of his convictions. The discharge of V.K. Singh was a small price to pay.

The second point is that members of the heaven-born service have again allowed themselves to be brow-beaten by kowtowing to corrupt politicians. They were

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only too ready to sacrifice an officer with principles in the interests of self-preservation.
Paramakud *G. Parthasarthy*

■ It is shameful that Home Minister Zail Singh consistently tried to shield the delinquent IAS probationer on the persuasion of some powerful politicians.
Madhepur *Mukul Bihari Verma*

■ I was delighted by P.S. Appu's crusading spirit and stringent and principled stand against V.K. Singh. Appu has strengthened the morality in the civil service by his determined action. The country is in great need of bureaucrats like him.
Chandigarh *K. Saibaba*

■ The report was a rehash of all the others which had been published earlier. It failed to shed any new light. In fact, the case needs to be gone into deeper and all the culprits punished. There's no use in making an example of only one person.
New Delhi *A. Mohan*

■ I found your concluding remarks that the IAS now stands for "I Agree Sir" not merely humorous but highly thought-provoking. If our talented and groomed administrators are deprived of initiative the nation is bound to decay. It would be a pity if the Government continues to stand on false prestige and does not reinstate an honest and devoted officer like P.S. Appu.
Secunderabad *Balwant Singh*

SEEKING REDRESS

The article "Bumpy Ride" (March 31) was really timely. The members of the All-India Women's Welfare Association (AIWWA) have my full sympathy. It is high time that advertising agencies stop exploiting women by portraying nudity in the most irrelevant and untasteful manner.
Lucknow *Anjan Em*

■ I was shocked to read: "It is said to be particularly popular among the roughneck trucking community of Punjab, who hang it up in their cabins alongside representations of gods and goddesses." INDIA TODAY has no right to write such denigrating stuff about any community or sect.
Ghaziabad *Gurpreet Singh Bala*

MISPLACED FOCUS

The interview with "An Old-fashioned Liberal" J.K. Galbraith (March 31) was very impressive. It was a pity, though, that the interview ended so abruptly. It would certainly have been better if the pages on paint and powder were shifted to some other issue, and a greater coverage was given to this marvellously stimulating interview.
Bombay *Meenakshi N.*

THE WILD BUNCH

After reading "All in the Family" (March 31) it appears that the Congress(I) is full of gangsters, rapists, murderers and unscrupulous barristers. Otherwise, how is Mrs Gandhi unable to choose sensible, sane, honest people to be at the helm of affairs? Either she amends the situation or she goes in the next general elections.
Bombay *Dr Leo A. Rebello*

■ Ashok Bhosale's statement that his father, the chief minister of Maharashtra, is purer than God shows just one thing—his incredible stupidity.
Calcutta *B.S. Manot*

In the report "Communal Clashes" in Tamil Nadu (March 31) the author has said: "To top it all, the 1981 census came out with a startling fact: there had been a 2 per cent drop in the Hindu population of Kanyakumari district". No data on religions based on the 1981 census has been released.
New Delhi *P. Padmanabha*
Registrar General and
Census Commissioner, India

■ What happened in Kanyakumari is nothing new. In the past also atrocities have been committed against Christians in Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. It is tragic that the most peaceful community of our country has become a victim of torture in their own homeland.
Aligarh *Osmond Charles*

TEACHING TROUBLES

■ After reading "Death of a Dynasty" (March 15) I wish to register my disappointment when told that Nar Bahadur Bhandari has risen from an ordinary teaching job in a school to the chief minister's post. If you think that a teaching job in a school is an "ordinary job" you have insulted me, Nar Bahadur Bhandari, but worse, you have insulted your teachers.
Kohima *Dr I.U. Ahmed*

JUST DESERTS

From one man in a desert to those fighting to prevent India from becoming one—"Keep up the good work" ("Plunder Blunder", March 15).
Dubai *A. Bhardwaj*

RICHES TO RAGS

The cost of organising the "See India" show at Selfridge's ("Selling A Civilisation", April 15) was wrongly printed. The show cost Rs 21.6 lakh. ***Editor***

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH: RAGHU RAI

COVER STORY: Ever since her dramatic departure from the prime minister's house late last month, Maneka Gandhi has become the most talked-about woman in the country. What is the Maneka factor? How far do her ambitions extend and what exactly are her future plans? To gauge the public reaction, INDIA TODAY commissioned a snap poll and to discover what makes Maneka tick so loudly, spent a week probing her gutsy facade. **Page: 22**

OPINION POLL: Though INDIA TODAY's quarterly opinion poll is now into its second year, at no other time since its introduction has its significance been so marked. Next month, the country will stage a mini-general election that promises to set the final stamp of approval or disapproval on the ruling party's performance. What does the urban electorate feel about the current situation? **Page: 18**

SPECIAL REPORT: As the industrial capital of India, Maharashtra is the country's most vital and progressive state. Or used to be. Suddenly, the political power play between former chief minister A.R. Antulay and his lightweight successor, Babasaheb Bhosale has started taking its toll. Statistically, Maharashtra's performance on a number of vital fronts has taken a nosedive and the future looks grim. An in-depth report. **Page: 32**

SPECIAL FEATURE: The long-standing feud between the former Rajmata of Gwalior, Vijaya Raje Scindia and her son, Congress(I) MP Madhavrao, took on ugly overtones last fortnight. With both mother and son belonging to opposite ends of the political spectrum, it was inevitable. But the rift goes far deeper than most people believe. **Page: 92**

ECONOMY & INDUSTRY: Is India lurching to the right? Certainly, the economic and industrial decisions taken in the last few months strongly indicate that such is the case. The proof of the pudding, however, will lie in the eating and how adroitly the new Finance Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, does his balancing act between socialist rhetoric and capitalist reality. A rare interview with Mukherjee and an analysis of the economic smoke signals. **Page: 100**

PROFILE: As a success story, the short but dramatic saga of southern superstar Kamalahasan has few, if any, equals. With a 100-odd movies in southern languages under his belt, Kamalahasan burst like a meteorite on Bombay's bewildered film industry and, on the strength of just one movie, the box-office hit *Ek Duuje Ke Liye*, has become the hottest property in town. A profile of the superstar. **Page: 116**

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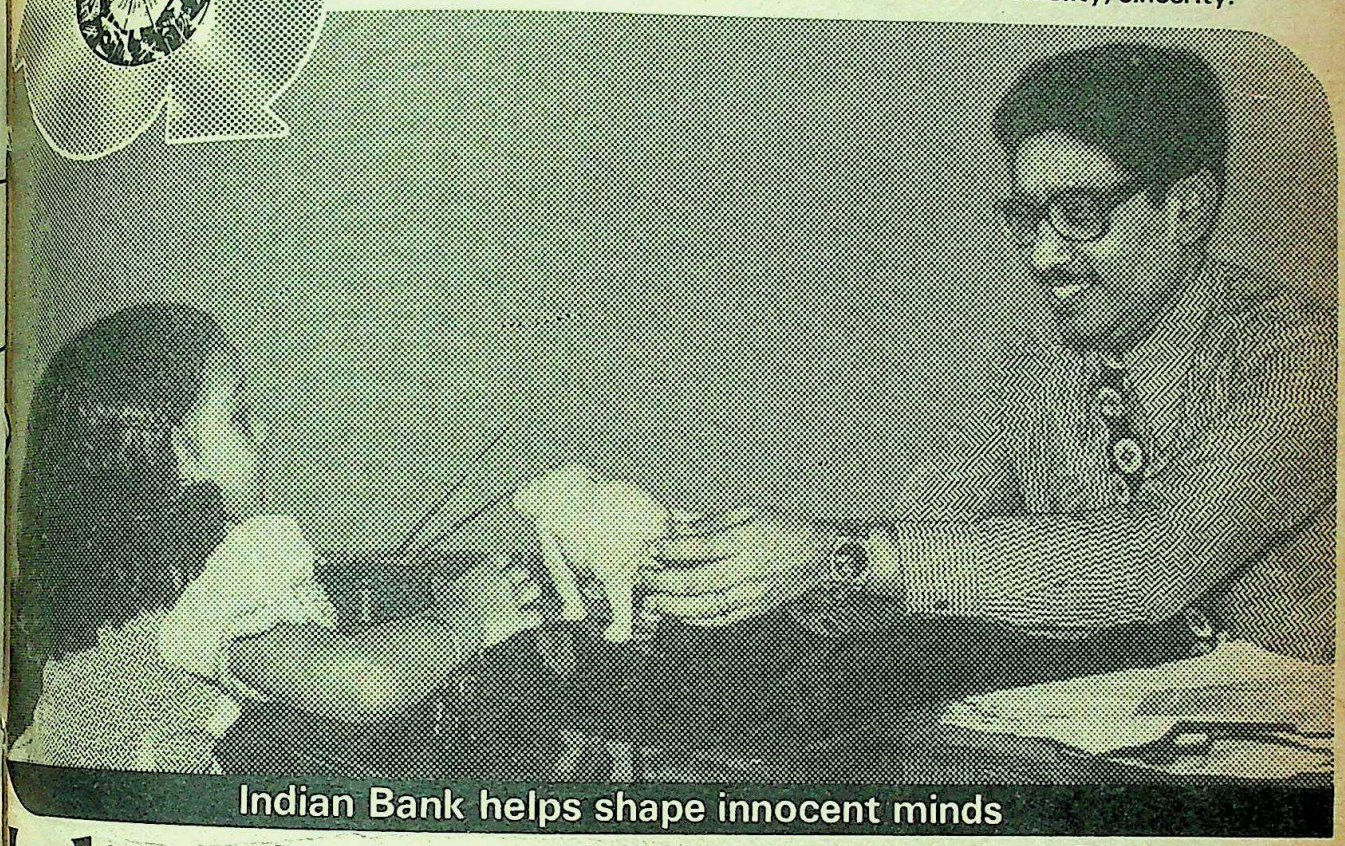
GEM FOR THE MONTH

DIAMOND is said to be the birthstone for **April**. Colourless, yellow, brown, sometimes green, blue, reddish or black, its hardness on Mohs' scale is 10 – the greatest. It symbolises **peace, innocence, fidelity, sincerity.**



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SERVICE CHARGE

THE armed forces may finally be getting their just due in terms of salary and allowances. The Defence Ministry, according to sources, is putting the finishing touches to a pay revision for the services that will put them nearly on par with their counterparts on civvy street. Sources say the pay revision, the first of its kind since 1947, envisages a considerable hike in salaries and allowances for serving personnel, one that is more realistically in keeping with current prices and inflation.

TASTE OF THE FUTURE

A GROUP of senior Pakistani military officials were secretly flown to the American base in Diego Garcia recently. The Pakistani officials included pilots, submarine crew and commando experts. It is authoritatively learnt that the clandestine trip for the Pakistanis was part of the orientation exercise undertaken by the US for its allies. Diplomatic sources here said that since induction of Pakistani military men in the proposed Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) for Persian Gulf was part of the American strategic plan, it was decided to give the Pakistanis a taste of the now expanded Diego Garcia base which would be used by the RDF.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

THE exit of Maneka Gandhi from No 1 Safdarjung Road has triggered off a shake-up in the security set-up in the prime minister's house. The entire security contingent has been changed. Mrs Gandhi was very unhappy at the security staff's failure to report to her the activities of Maneka who went out of the house frequently during the last few days. When Maneka left the house to go to Corbett Park and then to Lucknow, her whereabouts were not known to the security or intelligence men. Only when she left Corbett Park did they come to know that she spent the night there.

TURN OF THE REDS

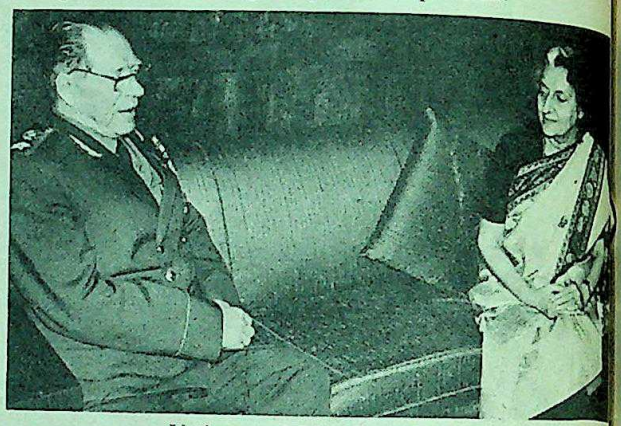
AFTER the failure of non-communist opposition parties, it is now the turn of extremists and non-political groups to strive for unity. This fortnight over 1,000 representatives of 100 non-aligned political groups including 13 different Naxalite factions will descend on New Delhi to discuss the possibility of launching a national front to fight the "Autocratic regime of the Congress(I) led by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi". Termed as "National Conference to resist Autocracy"—first of its kind after 1980—it will be attended by top leaders working either for civil rights or among peasants, industrial workers, women and minorities from all over the country.

Star attractions of the three-day conference are likely to be top Naxalite leaders like Nagabhushan Patnaik, Satyanarain Singh, Vinod Mishra and Chandra Pulla Reddy—[illegible] of them evading arrests in their own states. Though a modest beginning was made to reunite various Naxalite groups in a meeting convened in Naxalbari early this year, all of them could not send their representatives. However, for the New Delhi conference, 13 Naxalite parties, offshoots of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) have agreed to participate.

Patnaik: star attraction

SOVIET SNUB

SOVIET annoyance at Mrs Gandhi's inability to host a lunch for Defence Minister Marshal Ustinov, here last month on an official visit, and the absence of two service chiefs who were away on foreign tour, has been given pointed expression.



Ustinov and Mrs Gandhi: tit for tat

The small Indian defence delegation invited to Moscow last week to follow up the talks he had here during his visit were received by rickety small taxis instead of the usual black limousines at the airport. Completely cold-shouldered, for four of their seven-day stay there were no discussions. No programme was drawn up for them even for sightseeing.

COPPING OUT OF THE ACADEMY

IF THE Lal Bahadur Shastri Academy for the IAS has its V.N. Singh, the National Police Academy at Hyderabad has its share of delinquents too. The Union Home Ministry has been requested to order the discharge of two probationers accused of indiscipline and dishonesty. One probationer, Hemant Kumar Mittal, 25, charged with absenting himself from the academy under false pretexts, has been sent home already. The second episode, which revolves around a trainee, Anoop Jaiswal, 27, inciting his class-mates to skip classes, has been kept under wraps and is still hanging fire in the Home Ministry.

FUMBLE IN THE SKIES

VAYUDOOT, the third level airline is slowly but surely sinking into a bigger mess. Already in the red, the one man show run by Captain B.K. Bhasin, general manager for Vayudoot on loan from Indian Airlines (where he is director, flight safety) has decided to allow travel agents and flying clubs to handle its flights for which they have to pay agent's commission and handling charges. With its growing network Vayudoot has already added in the north Chandigarh, Jullundur, Kulu and Dehra Dun sectors by the gas-guzzling Avros, which Indian Airlines is trying to phase out. Sources say it will not be before 1984 that a decision can be taken to select the right type of aircraft. Till then the unholy mess is bound to continue.

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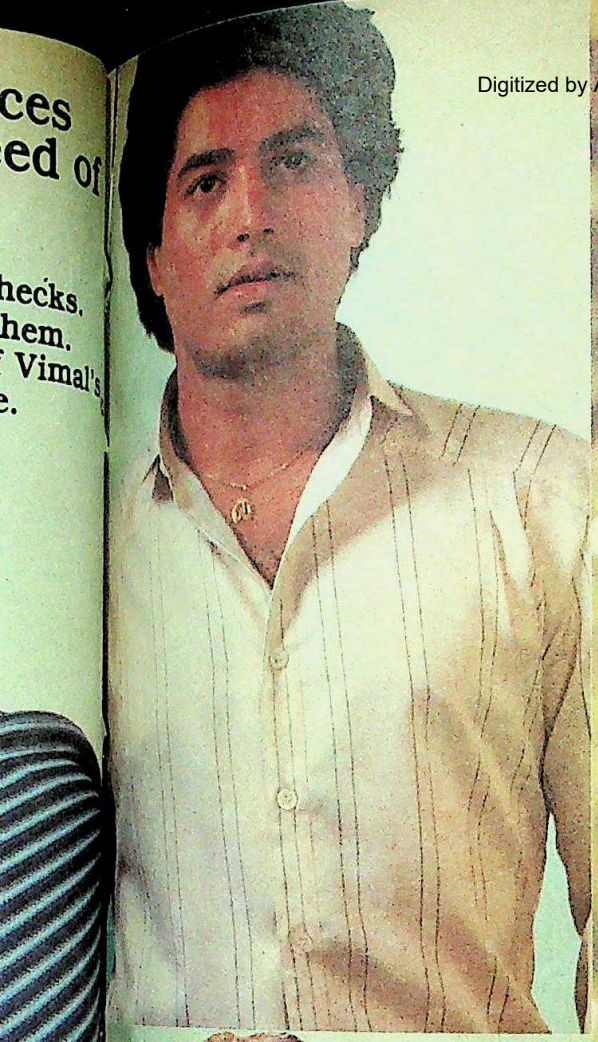

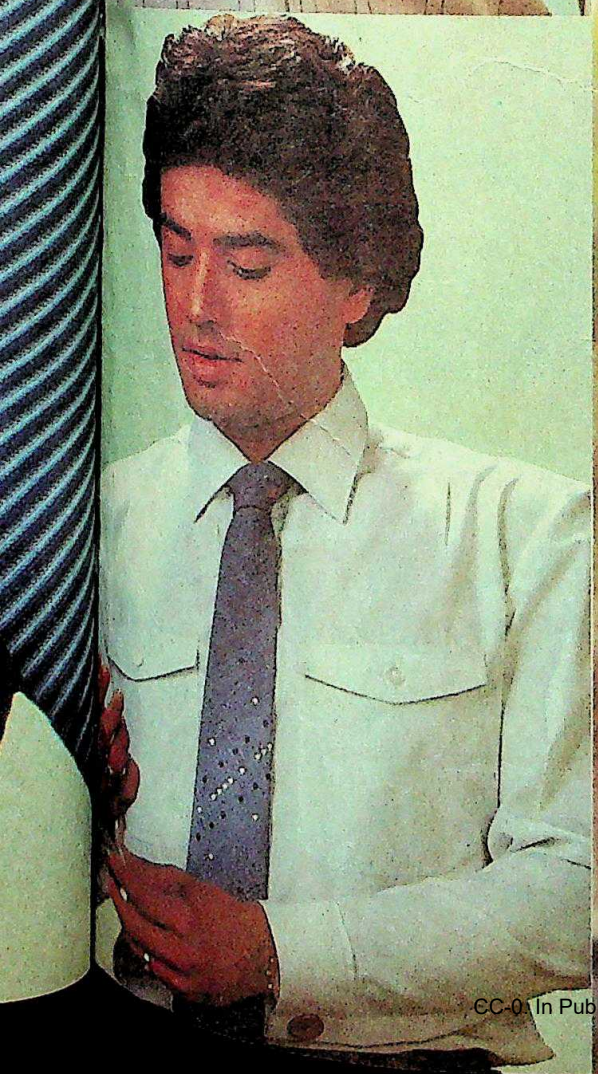

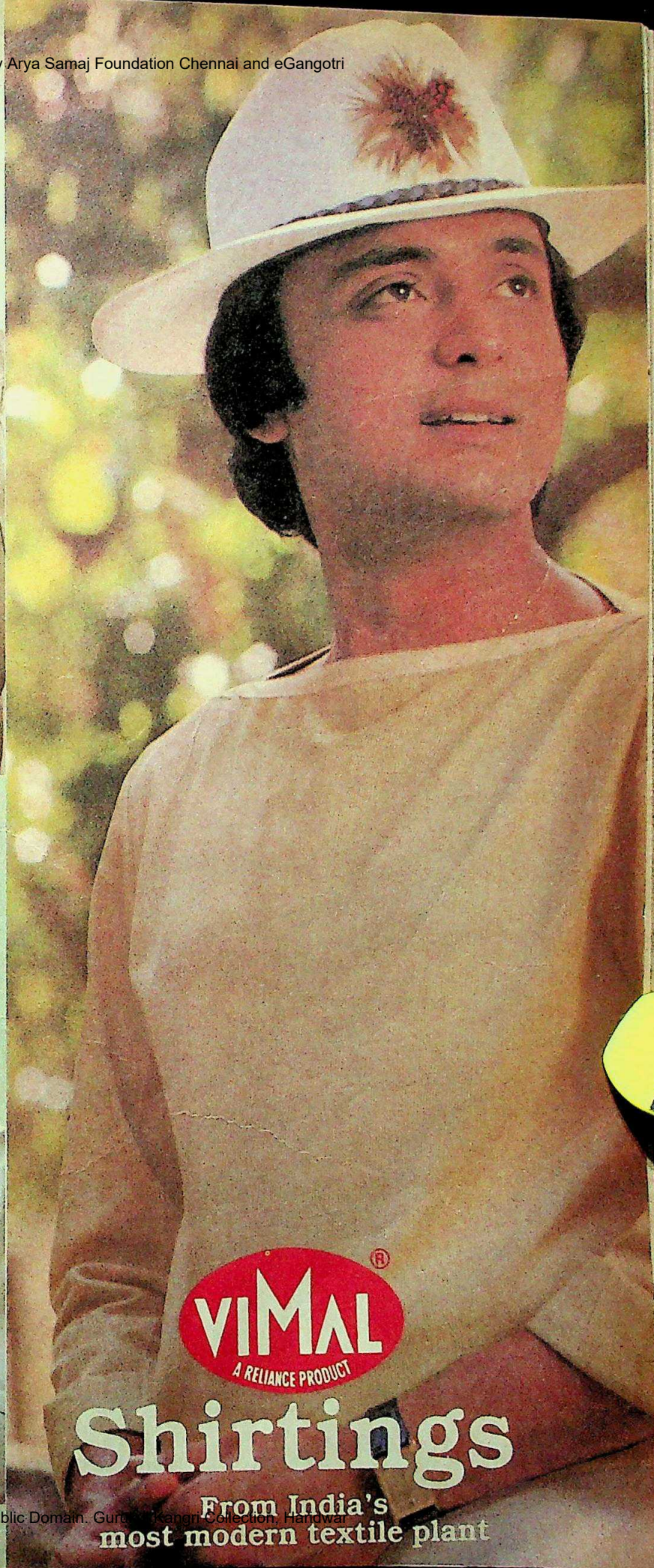

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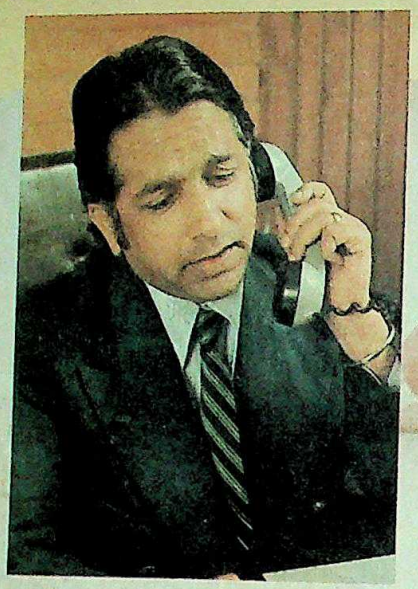
Ever worked in your wife's kitchen Mr. Executive?

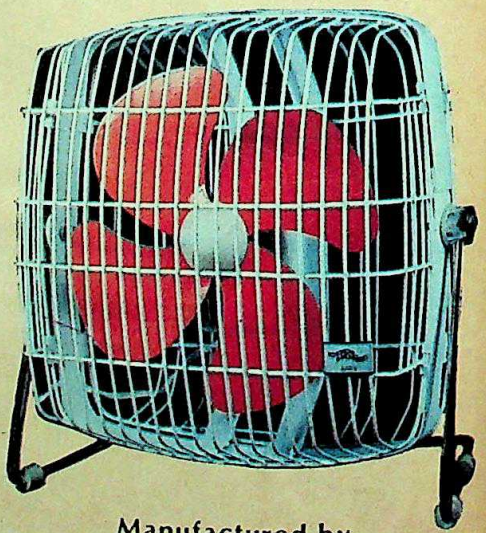


While you have the comfort of swivel chairs and air conditioners to help you through your busy day, your wife has fumes and smells. And heat, heat, heat—when it's already hot enough to fry an egg in the sunshine.

So you're too busy being an executive to give her a hand in the kitchen! You could at least give her a thought. A thought she'll remember every time she enters the kitchen.

The Airy. A sleek and functional fan that fits comfortably in the smallest corner, and keeps your wife cool as she turns out hot meals.

It's the least you could do, isn't it, Mr. Executive?



AIRY DOMESTIC it shows you care

Manufactured by AMERICAN UNIVERSAL

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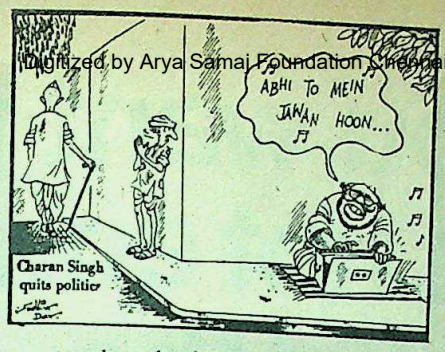

▸ The ruling party has refused Rajya Sabha tickets to some of its ministers. If these gentleman are not now good enough even to become MPs how were they earlier considered good enough to be made ministers?
—*K.R. Malakani in* Organiser

▸ People in public life have to remain content with their wives. It does not matter how businessmen and journalists manage their morals.
—*Subramaniam Swamy in* Current

▸ I will give my life for my husband but I will never share him.
—*Saira Banu quoted in* Stardust

▸ I have not made it a purely party paper. I have always asked reporters to report objectively.
—*Yashpal Kapoor on* The National Herald *quoted in* Onlooker

▸ We have developed South-east Asia. We have developed Africa. The United States today is in danger of being developed by us. The only country we cannot develop is India.
—*Piloo Moday in* Onlooker

▸ It is sad to think that a man of his gifts was wasted. It must, however, be admitted that there was something sharply negative about him, a negativism which is not altogether alien to Gandhism.
—*Ashtavakra on Acharya Kripalani in* The Illustrated Weekly

▸ Our government is the most open government anywhere in the world. I don't know of any of our decisions that are not known by the people.
—*V.P. Sathe quoted in* Probe

▸ All the ills to which the press is allegedly heir have more virulent counterparts in the political system . . . . If newspapers are vendors of news, politicians have to trade off assurances and rose-tinted horizons, which may turn out to be phoney.
—*From the note submitted by Press Council dissidents against the official report*

▸ At no stage did I want to be in politics. My first love is animal welfare and I am working for that.
—*Maneka Gandhi quoted in* Patriot

▸ From Mother she has demoted herself to Mother-in-Law of the nation.
—*K.R. Sunder Rajan in* Sunday Observer

▸ The prime minister and Maneka were involved in the kind of quarrel most Indian families know only too well. And at stake was the ancestral property—India—with the heir in dispute.
—*Vinod Mehta in* Sunday Observer

▸ It is a plot hatched by some foreign powers with the aid of some internal groups with a view to creating political instability in India.
—*Babasaheb Bhosale referring to the rift between Maneka and Mrs Gandhi*

▸ I was sorely tempted to write . . . on second thoughts I decided it would be wiser (and safer) to hold my tongue and pen . . . . However, let me state this much today: nothing so far said or written by any minister, politician or journalist has any substance or truth in it.
—*Khushwant Singh in* The Hindustan Times *on the Maneka affair*

▸ In the prevailing climate of luxury consumption it is a sad commentary on the national development pattern that while two hundred million are forced to live below the poverty line, vast sums are spent to cajole a minority into spending more and more on luxury goods.
—*Shamlal in* The Times of India

▸ Isn't it time we scrapped the whole ridiculous system of examinations as conducted today? Parents who take pride in their children getting a 'first class first' should know that this means only earning a place on top of the dungheap.
—*RGK in* The Times of India

Readership Survey

Dear Reader,

Some of you may have received IMRB's questionnaire in the previous issue of INDIA TODAY. If you haven't completed and posted your questionnaire already, please do so as soon as possible. The information you provide us will help in making INDIA TODAY better suited to your needs.

Your response is important to us. So don't forget to post your questionnaire today in the prepaid envelope.

Aroon Purie
Editor

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When you want to be No 1, it's not enough to be the first in the field.

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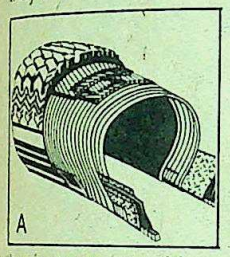
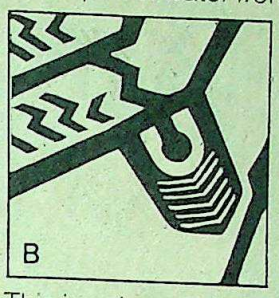
Take the Dunlop SP Sport Radial car tyre.
We weren't the first in the field because we didn't want to be.
We wanted time to make sure that what we put out was exactly right for our roads.
After all, no amount of modern technology can help if you bash about a tyre meant for the autobahns of Germany on the avenues of Calcutta. We had access to the latest international technology, sure. But we tested and modified this technology rigorously to suit Indian conditions.
And the result: a premium car tyre that's truly the best for Indian driving conditions.

Special design for Indian roads, Indian cars. Most radials are designed for the perfect road surfaces of the West. Also, they are not suited to the suspension systems of Indian cars. The specially-developed fabric belting and nylon casing of the SP Sport, (Figure A) on the other hand, take into account the rigorous conditions on Indian city roads. As a result they give you much higher dependability and greater comfort. Also the tyre is much kinder to your car suspension.


A

Unique Aquajet system. An exclusive and patented product of Dunlop research, the Aquajet (Figure B) is ideal for wet roads, because it pumps out water from the tyre path and actually dries the contact area between tyre and road. Result—perfect safety, the least you can expect from a high-technology tyre. And only Dunlop gives it to you.

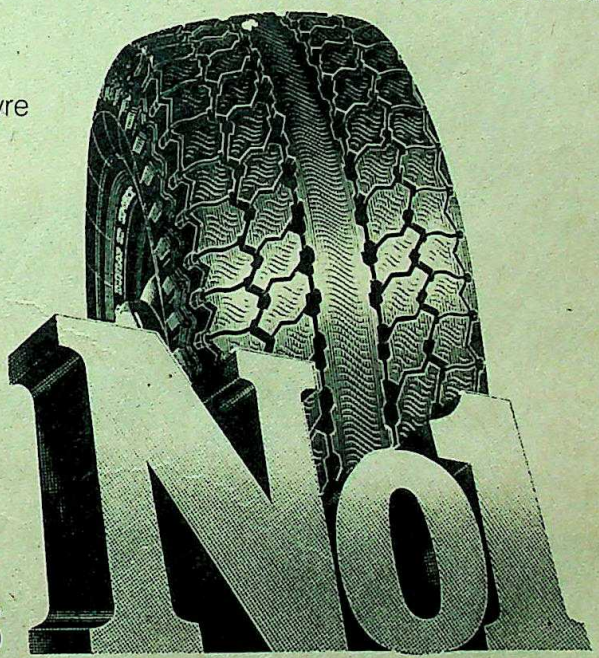

B

This is only part of the story. If you want to know more (and, if you love your car, we're sure you do) write in for our free booklet to Advertising Department, Dunlop India Limited, Post Box No 9023 Calcutta 700 016.

We'll be happy to explain.

After all, being No 1 means having you on our side.

Dunlop SP Sport Radial is currently available for Hindustan Ambassador cars in size 165 SR 15 and Fiat 1100/Premier Padmini cars in size 155 SR 14.



India's No 1

DUNLOP

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RADIAL

Miles ahead in performance

HTC-DIL-4440 R

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ICIM 2904 System: The only Indian computer that doesn't ask the user to join a queue.

...t has, for many years, ...e computer industry in ...echnique of ...-programming. ICIM, ...h complete access to ICL ...w-how, has also acquired ...orough understanding ...and command over, this ...anced and highly ...plex technology. And ...e ICIM 2904, of which 28 ...ems have already been ...ed, offers this facility. ...e processing speed of the ...M 2904, combined with ...powerful operating ...em, the unique ...cutive 3S, permits concurrent control and scheduling of up to eight batch streams. This is in addition to Direct Data Entry and Remote Job Entry, all handled by Multiple Transaction Processing software.

Besides functioning as a stand-alone system, the ICIM 2904 can also be linked to other systems in a choice of modes: as a host to a number of interactive data terminals, like the ICIM 7502; or as a slave to a larger system like the ICL 2950; or in a network mode, with other ICIM 2904 Systems, in a distributed processing environment.

When the ICIM 2904 was introduced in India, it had already proved a success with more than 3000 installed systems the world over. The Calcutta Electricity Supply Corporation, Godrej Soaps, Bharat Coking Coal limited, Raymond Woollen Mills, are just a few among forty ICIM 2904 customers in India.

A buyer who opts for the ICIM 2904 gets the most powerful Indian computer, backed by ICIM's unique Total Computer Service. This includes consultancy, technical support, training, business and scientific software, system installation and maintenance. Equally important, it brings you the benefit of ICIM's specialised applications software support, and the superior technology of International Computers Limited, UK.

ICIM International Computers Indian Manufacture Limited

...nextension of your mind. ICIM 2904

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IMRB-INDIA TODAY BAROMETER

Subtle Shifts

IN September 1980, INDIA TODAY *published the findings of the first of a series of quarterly opinion polls conducted by the Indian Market Research Bureau* (IMRB) *in Delhi and 15 state capitals. The main purpose of the* IMRB-INDIA TODAY *Barometer is to regularly monitor public opinion in 16 key cities of India. While these cities do not represent Indian public opinion as a whole, they do provide an indication of the mood (and the changes in it) of the more volatile and informed sections of the voting public.*

The IMRB-INDIA TODAY *Barometer is now in its second year. In this issue are presented the results of the poll conducted towards the end of March 1982. During this poll a total of 6,273 electors were interviewed in 15 cities. (Because of unsettled conditions, Gauhati, once again, could not be covered.) The cities polled are:* NORTH-*Delhi, Lucknow, Chandigarh, Srinagar, Jaipur,* EAST-*Calcutta, Patna, Bhubaneswar,* SOUTH-*Madras, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Trivandrum,* WEST-*Bombay, Ahmedabad, Bhopal.*

MRS GANDHI'S STANDING

THE IMRB-INDIA TODAY Barometer shows a marginal improvement in the popularity (those satisfied with her minus those dissatisfied) of Mrs Gandhi between December 1981 and March 1982.

In Bombay and the west, her popularity has increased considerably since December. For the first time, her supporters outnumber her detractors in the commercial capital of India. In Bhopal and Ahmedabad, her popularity has taken a downturn. In Ahmedabad, those dissatisfied with her outnumber those satisfied with her.

In her traditional strongholds of the north, her undisputed sway continues with supporters clearly outnumbering those dissatisfied with her.

In the east, the balance of popularity continues to be in her favour both in Calcutta and Patna. But in Congress(I)-dominated Bhubaneswar, her detractors clearly outnumber her backers.

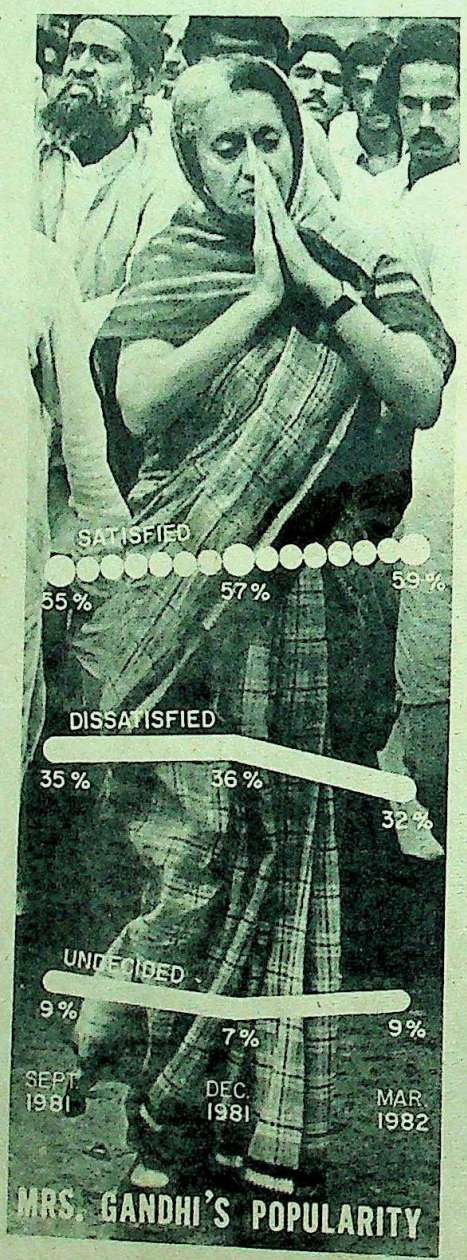
In the south, 'Indiramma' continues to be popular in Madras, Hyderabad and Trivandrum. But in Gundu Rao's Bangalore, her opponents continue to be more numerous than her supporters for the fifth successive quarter.

ELECTORAL POPULARITY

IF THE March 1982 poll is any guide, it is the BJP that will provide the strongest opposition to the Congress(I) in most of the capital cities if an election to the Lok Sabha is held. In 11 out of the 15 capitals, the BJP is poised in second position. It is weak only in the regional redoubts of the CPI-M (Calcutta and Trivandrum), the AIADMK/DMK (Madras) and the National Conference (Srinagar).

Only in Calcutta has the popularity of the Congress(I) increased by 5 per cent or more since the December poll. On the other hand, its popularity has declined by more than 5 per cent in five cities, viz Patna, Bhubaneswar, Jaipur, Madras and Bangalore.

In the three western capitals the Congress(I) clearly leads with the BJP in second position. In Bombay and Ahmedabad the Janata (JP) is a close third;



but in Bhopal it is primarily a two-... race.

The capitals of the north ... pattern fairly similar to that of the west... Congress(I) leads everywhere. The N... Conference provides the main opposi... Srinagar. In all the other capitals, it is ... that is second—but its performance is ... better in Jaipur and Delhi than in Luc... and Chandigarh.

In the south the Congress(I) ha... support of 40-50 per cent of the electora... Madras, Hyderabad and Trivandrum... Madras the DMK and the AIADMK are ne... line, while in Hyderabad it is the BJP ... second followed by the Janata(JP)... President-ruled Trivandrum CPI-M is a ... second, considerably behind the Congr... but way ahead of the others. In Banga... the various scandals finally appear to ... caught up with Gundu Rao. For the ... time since IMRB-INDIA TODAY comme... forecasts the Congress(I) has been ... taken as the largest party by the BJP.

STATE OF THE NATION

IN A continuing paradox, Mrs Gan... popularity continues unabated, so ... the view among nearly two-thirds o... electorate that things are going badly f... country—Pranab Mukherjee's recent ... notwithstanding.

While the overall trend has rem... unchanged, the balance of opinion has ... tuated in a number of cities since Dece... In Bombay, Chandigarh and Jaipur ... balance of opinion shows greater sa... tion. In Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Hyder... and Srinagar the trend is the oppo... Srinagar, however, continues to be the ... city where those who feel things are ... well outnumber those who are unhappy ... the situation.

LAW AND ORDER

DURING the past four quarters ... has been little change in the opini... voters in the 15 cities taken together. ... who think that the law and order situ... has worsened in the last three months ... tinue to be at least twice as numerou... those who feel that the situation ... improved.

Compared with the December po... balance of opinion has become more fa... able in Bombay and Chandigarh. O... other hand, in Calcutta, Bhubane... Srinagar, Hyderabad and Bangalore the ... clear indication that the balance of op... has become less favourable—and ... more so for Bangalore than else... Srinagar and Trivandrum continue to ... only two capitals where those who thi... law and order situation has improved ... number those who think it has deteri...

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1982
DEC. 1981

Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with Mrs. Gandhi as Prime Minister ?

	BOMBAY	AHMEDABAD	BHOPAL	CALCUTTA	PATNA	BHUBANESHWAR	DELHI	LUCKNOW	CHANDIGARH	SRINAGAR	JAIPUR	MADRAS	HYDERABAD	TRIVANDRUM	BANGALORE
SATISFIED	54 / 42	42 / 49	55 / 66	58 / 59	57 / 55	44 / 51	70 / 70	71 / 76	63 / 60	93 / 82	65 / 64	70 / 65	52 / 56	57 / 62	38 / 41
DISSATISFIED	38 / 50	53 / 47	37 / 32	21 / 26	42 / 42	54 / 45	21 / 26	24 / 22	23 / 27	7 / 12	32 / 34	22 / 25	42 / 41	40 / 38	52 / 51
UNDECIDED	8 / 8	4 / 4	7 / 2	21 / 15	1 / 3	2 / 4	9 / 4	5 / 2	15 / 12	1 / 6	3 / 2	7 / 10	6 / 4	2 / 0	10 / 7

Compared with three months ago, is the law and order situation better, worse or the same ?

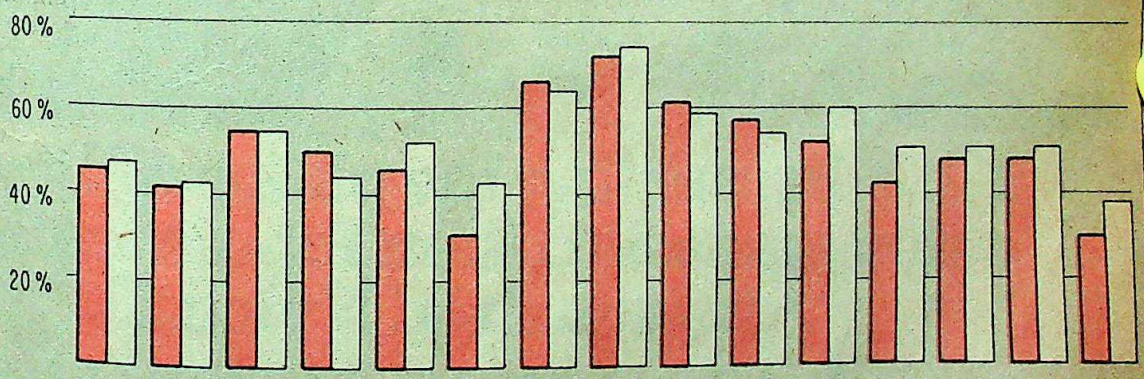
	BOMBAY	AHMEDABAD	BHOPAL	CALCUTTA	PATNA	BHUBANESHWAR	DELHI	LUCKNOW	CHANDIGARH	SRINAGAR	JAIPUR	MADRAS	HYDERABAD	TRIVANDRUM	BANGALORE
BETTER	17 / 7	12 / 19	19 / 26	18 / 27	18 / 27	11 / 17	28 / 30	19 / 30	22 / 13	51 / 50	14 / 11	13 / 15	22 / 31	34 / 33	12 / 26
WORSE	52 / 55	42 / 44	40 / 44	42 / 40	39 / 48	52 / 41	40 / 39	44 / 55	41 / 60	29 / 13	51 / 51	59 / 63	47 / 41	29 / 29	53 / 45
SAME	25 / 35	39 / 34	31 / 28	30 / 28	34 / 23	30 / 40	22 / 24	30 / 13	29 / 18	15 / 32	30 / 35	20 / 16	18 / 21	29 / 36	24 / 25
UNDECIDED	6 / 3	7 / 2	9 / 3	10 / 5	9 / 3	7 / 3	9 / 7	7 / 3	9 / 9	5 / 5	6 / 3	9 / 6	14 / 6	8 / 1	11 / 4

How do you feel things are going in the country these days ?

	BOMBAY	AHMEDABAD	BHOPAL	CALCUTTA	PATNA	BHUBANESHWAR	DELHI	LUCKNOW	CHANDIGARH	SRINAGAR	JAIPUR	MADRAS	HYDERABAD	TRIVANDRUM	BANGALORE
WELL	20 / 11	12 / 23	24 / 32	22 / 28	21 / 22	18 / 21	27 / 29	19 / 33	23 / 15	48 / 58	28 / 16	17 / 17	17 / 25	35 / 39	8 / 21
BADLY	69 / 80	71 / 67	53 / 59	63 / 61	62 / 64	75 / 72	53 / 57	59 / 59	61 / 75	38 / 30	66 / 72	67 / 75	66 / 64	38 / 46	72 / 67
UNDECIDED	12 / 10	17 / 11	23 / 9	15 / 11	17 / 14	7 / 7	20 / 14	21 / 8	17 / 10	14 / 12	6 / 12	16 / 8	17 / 10	27 / 15	20 / 12

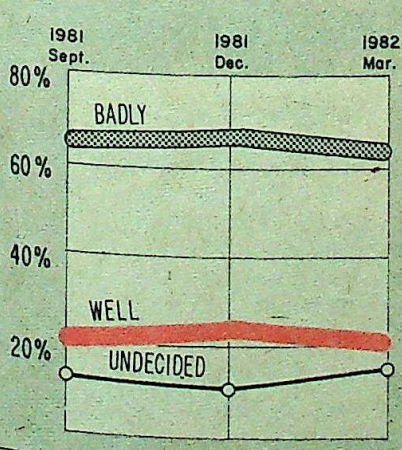
Percentage share of votes for Cong. (I)

Note: includes only those who would vote, excludes undecided

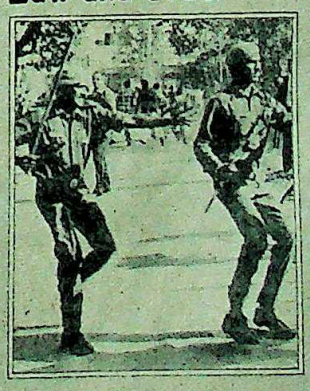


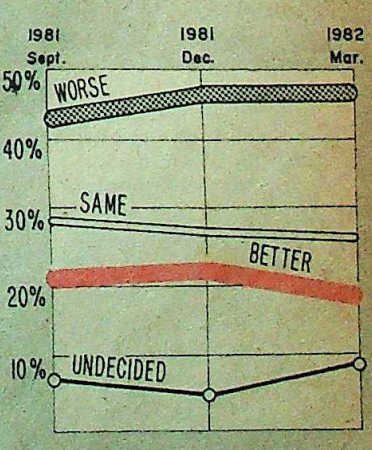
State of the Nation

INDIA TODAY Chart by B. K. Sharma



Law and Order





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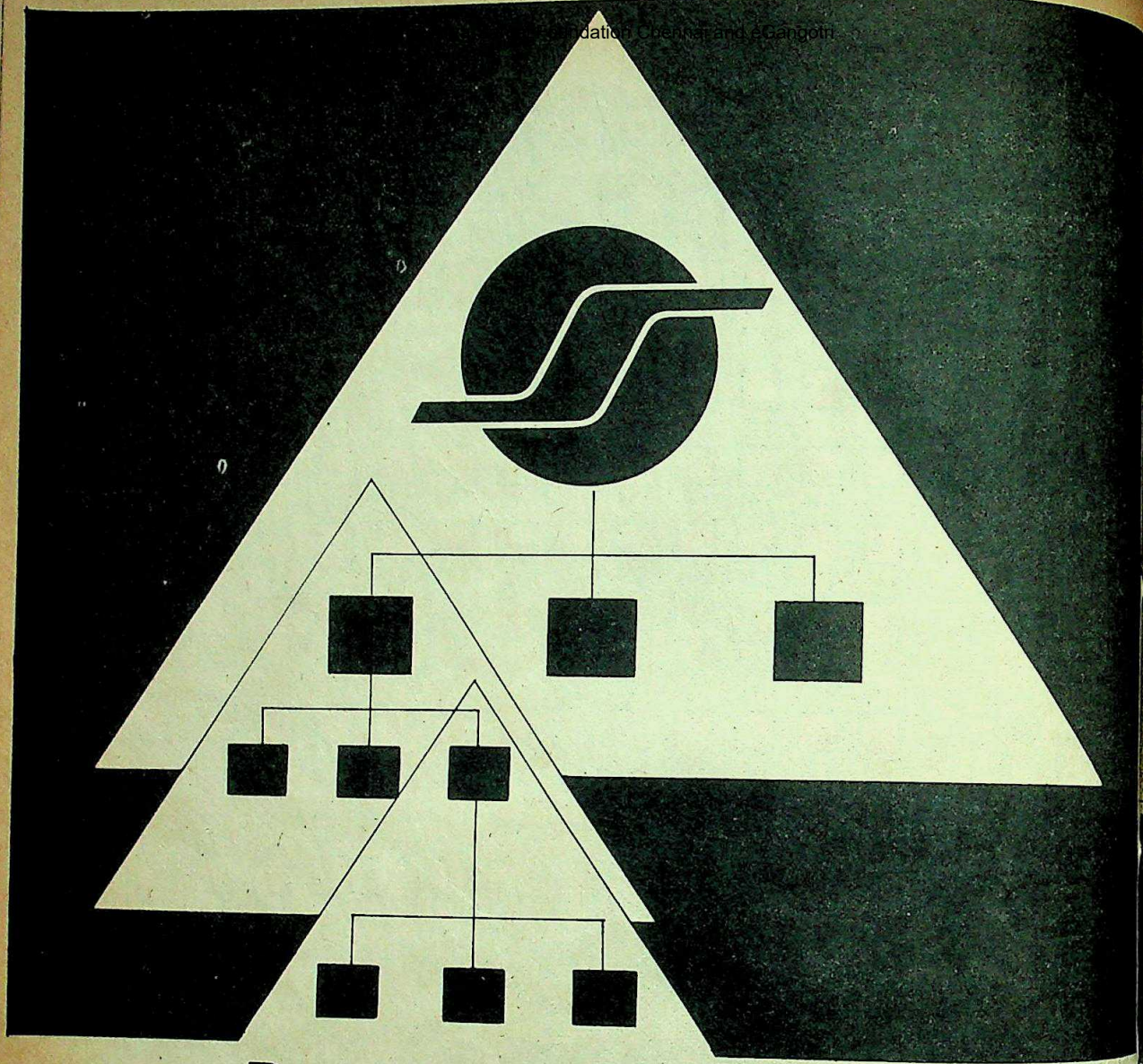

Presenting the philosophy that made Shri Ram Fibres leaders in Industrial Nylon....

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At Shri Ram Fibres, the accent is on youth, talent, results. There is commitment to career planning along with organisational growth. Creating a healthy and conducive atmosphere for self-actualisation.

SRF believes that people make the company. Executives at all levels participate in management decisions. This dynamic professionalism is what makes SRF an organisation that throbs with the sense of initiative, drive and undamped zeal. Every Executive in SRF today can proudly and justifiably claim his contribution towards making the company the No.1 in Industrial Nylon.

A leader always sets the example.

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THE JUDICIARY

WITH the judiciary currently being the subject of intense verbal and written debate, electors were asked whether they felt that the independence of the judiciary was being threatened.

While around one-third of the electors did not voice an opinion, there was a clear feeling among the others that the independence of the judiciary was indeed being threatened.

The strongest threat is perceived by electors in Hyderabad, Bangalore, Bhubaneswar, Ahmedabad, Srinagar and Patna. Trivandrum was the only city where the balance of opinion was evenly divided. In all other cities those who perceived the threat outnumbered those who did not.

JUDICIARY INDEPENDENCE				STATE OF CORRUPTION		
UNDECIDED	UNTHREATENED	THREATENED		INCREASED	DECREASED	UNCHANGED
15	34	50	BOMBAY	79	5	16
37	17	46	AHMEDABAD	74	2	24
35	31	34	BHOPAL	54	18	28
28	33	39	CALCUTTA	81	7	12
28	24	47	PATNA	72	14	15
35	17	47	BHUBANESWAR	82	3	14
32	30	39	DELHI	74	10	16
38	26	36	LUCKNOW	71	13	16
34	25	41	CHANDIGARH	86	2	12
14	30	56	SRINAGAR	89	6	5
30	27	43	JAIPUR	86	4	10
44	19	37	MADRAS	66	5	30
31	16	52	HYDERABAD	81	1	17
59	20	20	TRIVANDRUM	52	6	41
42	14	44	BANGALORE	74	3	23

CORRUPTION

ELECTORS were asked whether the extent of corruption in our society is increasing, decreasing or has remained unchanged.

Mrs Gandhi's assurance that corruption is a worldwide phenomenon does not appear to have mollified the electorate: 75 per cent of the voters in the 15 cities said that the extent of corruption has increased; only 7 per cent felt that the level had declined—the remainder did not venture an opinion.

The feeling that corruption has increased is voiced in every single city—but particularly strongly in Chandigarh, Jaipur, Srinagar and Hyderabad. In Trivandrum and in Bhopal there is a relatively smaller proportion of electors expressing that view.

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So you don't get run down.

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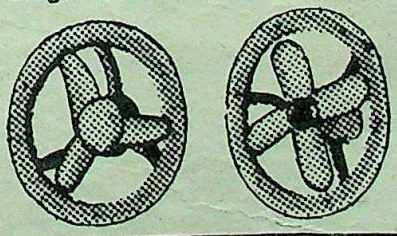

bajaj Exhaust Fans

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Gandhi vs Gandh

Pussy-cat, pussy-cat, where have you been?
I've been to Number One to look at the Queen!
Pussy-cat, pussy-cat, what did you there?
I frightened the dowager Queen out of her chair!

—A CONTEMPORARY RHYME

THE SCENARIO was swift and sinister, its implications severe and satirical, and the cast, give or take a few intruding male dwarfs, strictly all-female. Durga and Kali were riding demons in New Delhi last fortnight and, adopting various garbs, both were fighting for their versions of truth and justice. The difference in the two deities is obvious—but the good Hindu would argue that they are both manifestations of the same principle of power. While Indian culture was getting its initial airing 10,000 miles away in London, the average Indian had good evidence that his own culture—political and social—was alive and kicking at home.

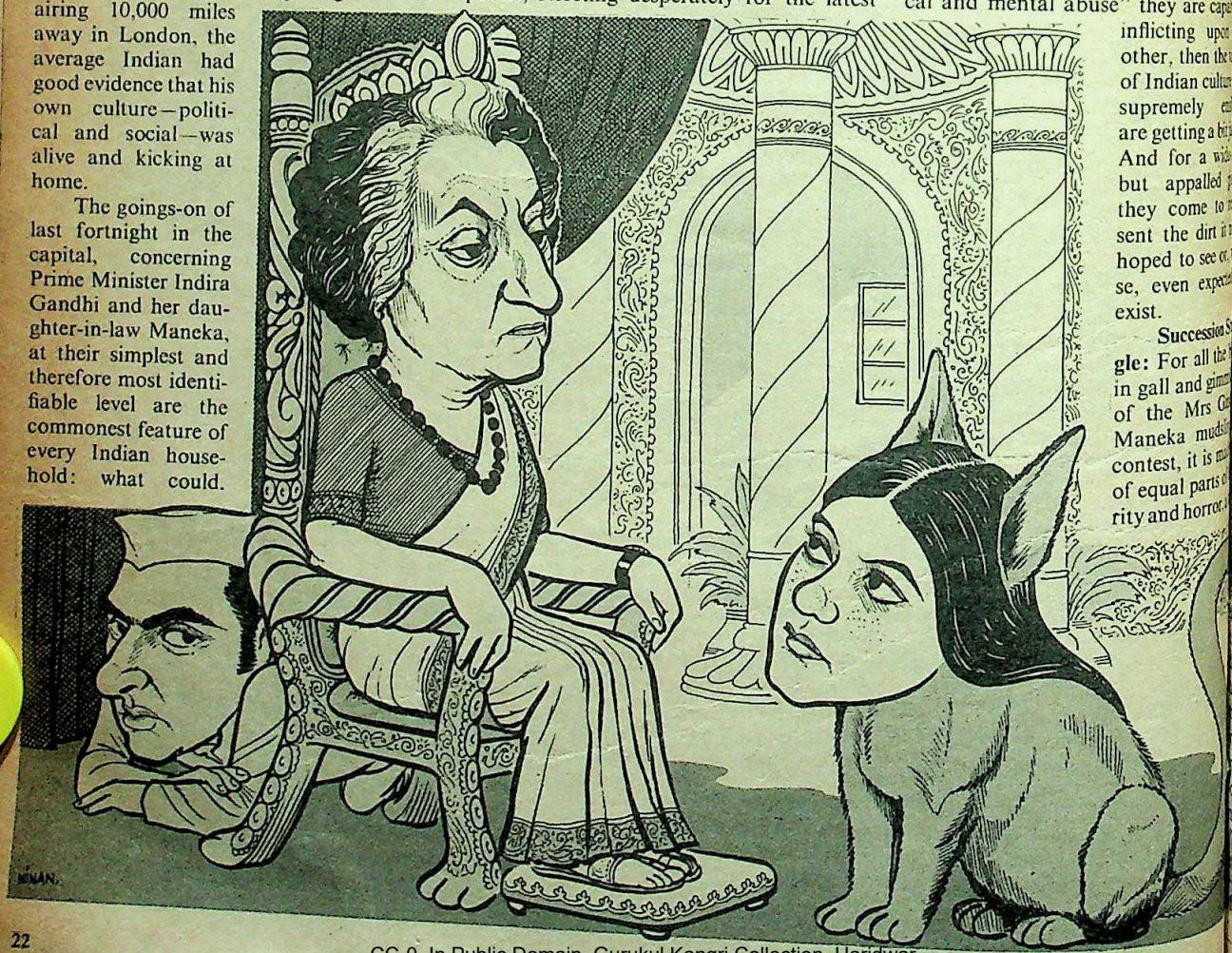
The goings-on of last fortnight in the capital, concerning Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and her daughter-in-law Maneka, at their simplest and therefore most identifiable level are the commonest feature of every Indian household: what could, after all, be more intrinsically an Indian situation that that of an imperious matriarch pitted against a wilfully juvenile daughter-in-law?

Political Implications: In this case, however, the matriarch straddles not just an ordinary household but more or less the entire country. And the rebellious young shrew, for all the innocence of her freckled face, is the widow of Sanjay Gandhi—a man once responsible for derailing Indian democracy—the bride, in fact, of a figure heralded as India's future prime minister.

Such being the allocation of lead roles, the episode was worth considerably more weightage than an item of mendacious gossip; and its political implications more widely felt than are being properly acknowledged. Certainly they were not lost on the public, ferreting desperately for the latest information, with government-owned and television having blacked out the And as one of the two chief antag herself put it two days after her dra departure from 1, Safdarjung Road: "I I'm the best value for money for the paper-reading public!"

Maneka's remark implies not j awareness of the high drama of her dis but also its essential element of p Because when august and controlled tical leaders, defenders of political fai upholders of public morality, hitch up saris to scream at each other like harr in a bazaar brawl, when they beg publish, or otherwise plant abusive and statements in the national press they begin to compare the "diff backgrounds they come from or the cal and mental abuse" they are capa inflicting upon other, then the of Indian culture supremely en are getting a bit And for a wid but appalled they come to sent the dirt it hoped to see or se, even expect exist.

Succession S gle: For all the in gall and gimm of the Mrs G Maneka muds contest, it is m of equal parts rity and horror.



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Rajnu Rai

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Sanjay Gandhi and Maneka: dirty linen

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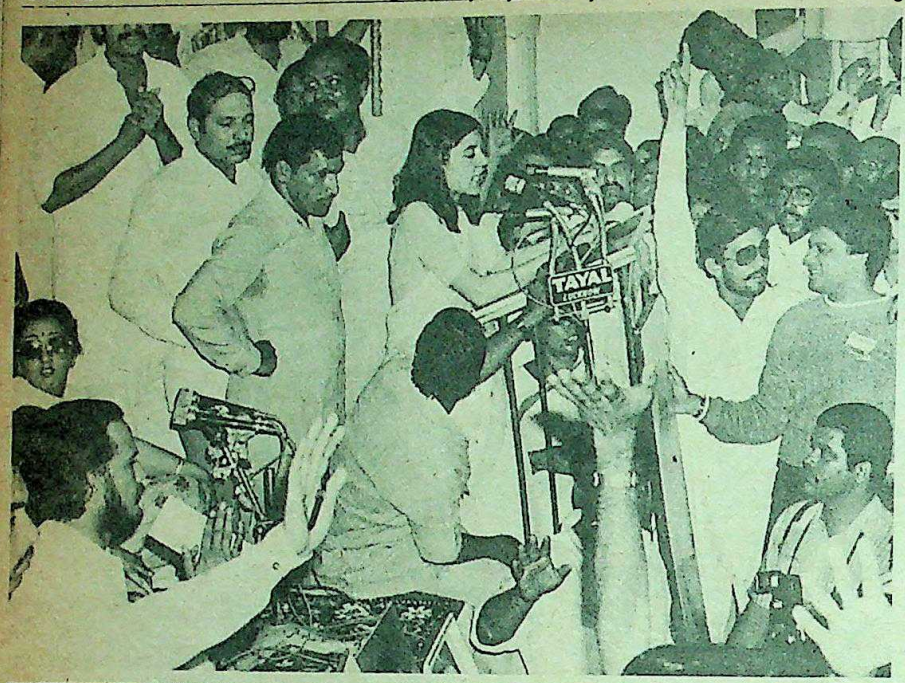
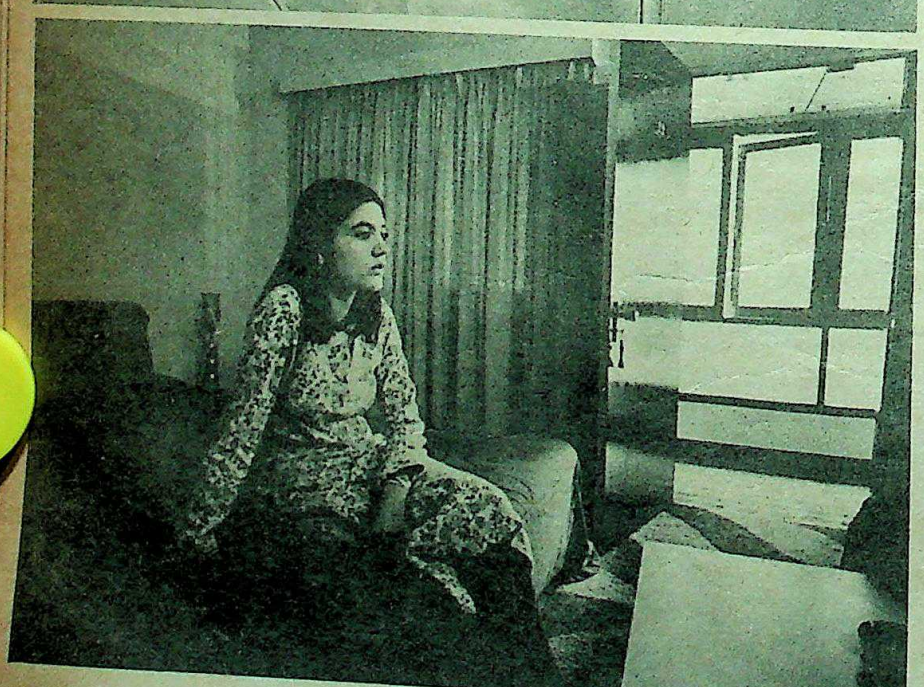


Bhawan Singh



room in a New Delhi motel, or beh... vast expanse of a desk in her fourth... office from where she runs a tr... business, this is obviously no long-st... widow-with-child cringing under... whiplash strokes of a tyrannical mot... law. The innocent face is hardening... shoulder-length hair falls straight, a... accent of her speaking voice is clipped... conventish, suprising for a girl who... attended coeducational public s... establishments. Dressed in cheerful ... *pyjamas* she looks neither trapped... oppressed but on top of the situation.

Lessons Learnt: This girl has l... from the illustrious Gandhis that "suffe... is a lovely word: they have "suff... hardest for country and kin, and they ... "sacrificed" harder. This girl has learnt ... her husband's family how to quote ... Bhagavad Gita or some other reli... scripture at appropriate moments. She ... learnt from her famous mother-in-law ... to answer in monosyllables, how to ha... public meetings, and how to handle a t... press. She knows how to call a p... conference, whom to pick for interv... how to release hand-outs, and exactly h... deal out the answers, the compliments ... the insults.

Most of all she has learnt ho... steadfastly deny that she has any po... plans exactly when she is in the thick of ... Like her late husband, and her brother-... law, who both made their debuts a... precise moment, she will go on denying ... she is a political person probably till m... before—if she so chooses—she is requi... file her nomination for an election.

Maneka Gandhi the survivor is, i... own phrase, "trying to get her act toget... and ostensibly that includes finding fa... house to live in—"only the second-... brave person in this city will rent me a h... The first-most brave person is me for le... the one I lived in"—so that she can fe... herself and her two-year-old son.

Declared Assets: This she will do o... small income she claims her husband ... her: as managing director of Raj ... Traders, she leased out trucks to distr... soft drinks for Congress(I) tycoon Cha... Singh; she is therefore entitled to a co... house and a salary-in-hand of abo... 2,700 per month. True, she owns a s... house on a large plot in a prime South ... suburb, but it's too small for her family ... Akbar Ahmed has occupied it since Sa... time, and it's awkward to expect him t... now.

These are her declared assets. Y... one need shed tears or collect pennies.

Maneka at the Lucknow convention ... leaving 1, Safdarjung Road and in her ... room: the final break

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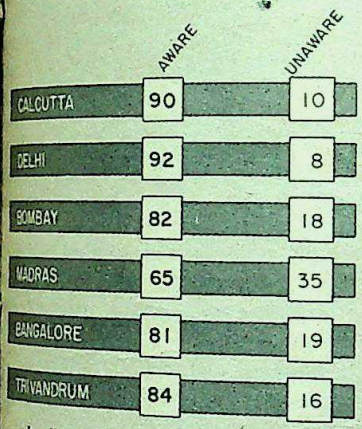
OPINION POLL

Advantage, Maneka

AS THE news of Maneka Gandhi quitting 1, Safdarjung Road spread like wildfire in the press AIR and Doordarshan maintained total silence—thanks presumably to 'freedom of the Government media') INDIA TODAY *commissioned Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB) to conduct a poll in six cities to find out how people have reacted to the internecine quarrel that has shaken the prime minister's household. On April 2, a total of 2,292 interviews were conducted in Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Madras, Bangalore and Trivandrum. The results of the poll.*

► *Awareness of the 'Problem'*

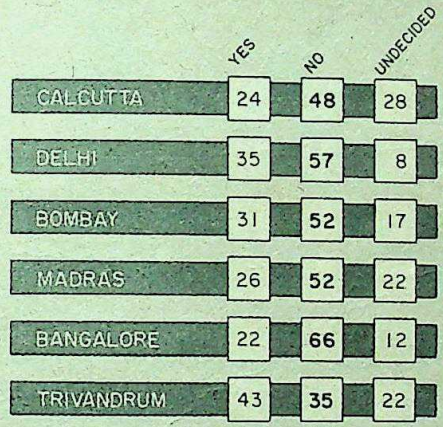


In all cities except Madras, over 80 per cent had heard of the problems that Maneka and her *saas* have been having. In Madras also, while over 80 per cent of the men were aware of the problems, only 45 per cent of the women had heard of the fracas. Those who had heard of the problems were further questioned on some specific aspects.

► *Should Maneka have attended the Lucknow convention?*

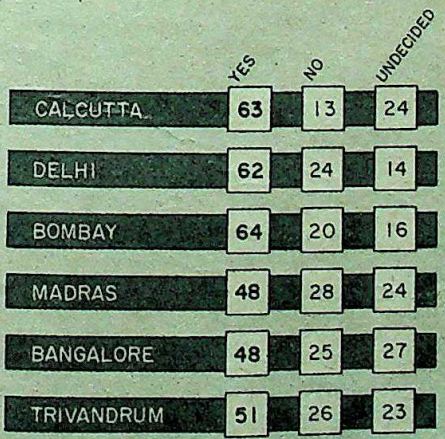
Both the Congress(I) and Mrs Gandhi had disapproved of the convention—yet Maneka attended it. On balance, electors in Delhi, Bombay, Madras and Bangalore felt that Maneka was right to attend the convention. Disapproval of her actions was surprisingly voiced in the Marxist strongholds of Calcutta and Trivandrum.

► *In the circumstances should Maneka have been asked to leave 1, Safdarjung Road?*



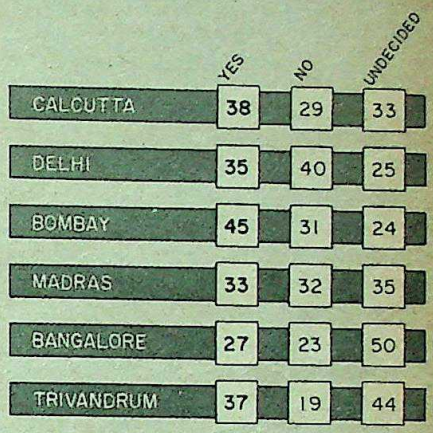
In every city except Trivandrum, more electors opposed Mrs Gandhi's action (in giving Maneka the marching orders if she did not change her ways) than supported her. The level of disapproval of Mrs Gandhi's action was greater among women (particularly in Delhi, Bombay and Madras) than among men.

► *Did the Lucknow convention have any political significance?*



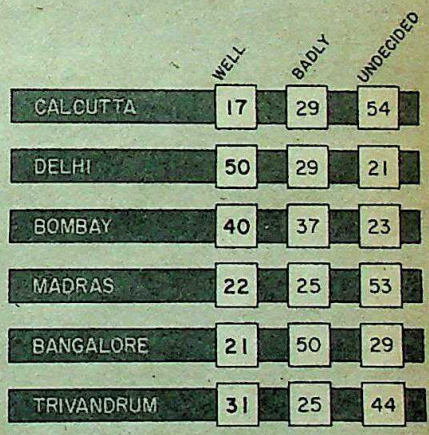
In all cities, there was a clear feeling that Maneka's action in attending the Lucknow convention had political significance. This view was held more strongly in Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi than elsewhere.

► *Is this the beginning of the Rajiv vs Maneka battle?*



Opinions varied across cities. Electors in Bombay, Calcutta and Trivandrum felt, on balance, that behind the current issue lay the Maneka vs Rajiv tussle. Electors in Delhi (who are closer to the scene of action) held the opposite view. In Madras and Bangalore, views were fairly evenly divided.

► *How is Rajiv doing as a politician?*



All respondents were asked whether they felt Rajiv was doing well or badly as a politician.

It is perhaps a sign of Rajiv's low profile that over 40 per cent of the electors in Calcutta, Madras and Trivandrum were unable to venture an opinion. The 'no view' proportion was, in general, higher among women (and particularly so in Calcutta and Madras).

In Calcutta and Bangalore the balance of opinion suggests that Rajiv is not doing well. In Delhi and Trivandrum, on the other hand, the balance is in his favour. In Bombay and Madras, opinion is fairly evenly divided.

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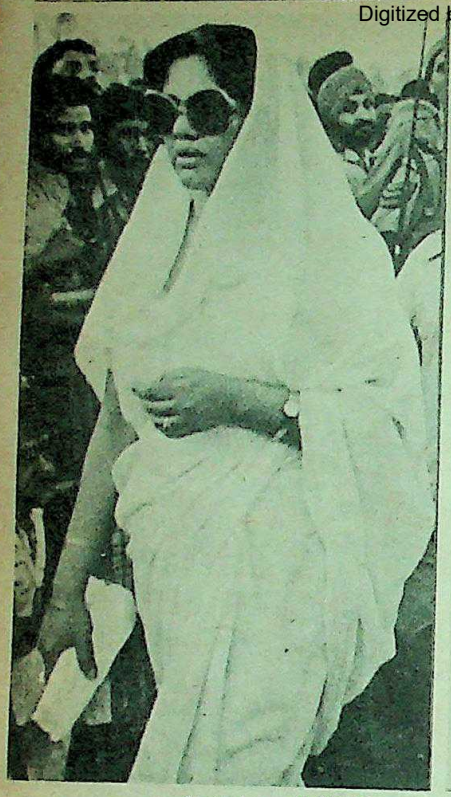

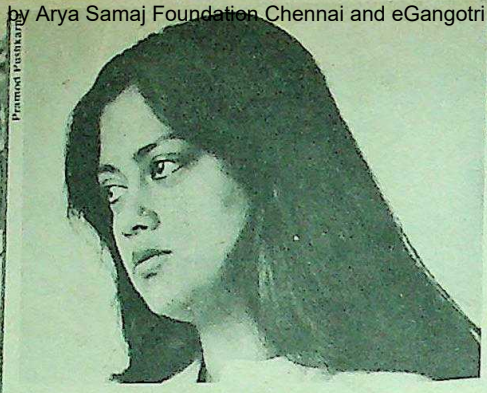

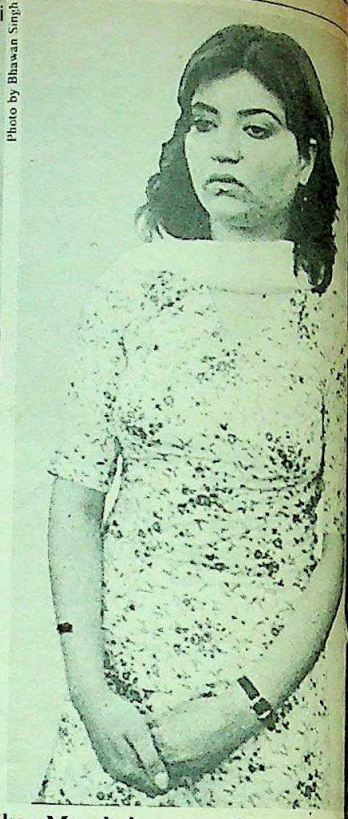

Amteshwar (left), Vasundhara (top centre),Ahmed (bottom centre) and Ambika: Maneka's protagonists

"Save Maneka" fund; nor is she likely to go around with a begging bowl, say erstwhile friends who swear of a fortune she was bequeathed by her husband; an expensive plane sold recently, real estate and a handsome trucking business. Certainly her mother, the artful Amteshwar can bail out her daughter now from her profits of once having been the "nation's mother-in-law". From being the wife of a humble army colonel living in rented accommodation, the once-feared Amteshwar, having acquired Safdarjung Road connections is said to have acquired much else: prime properties including a charming bungalow in an expensive New Delhi area.

Not content with being a magazine publisher, Amteshwar went into a partnership with a friend named Indira Dhody in a garment export business that, deviously, pressed textile inspectors into issuing certificates for export consignments; the case came up before the Shah Commission during the Janata regime and misuse of Mrs Gandhi's name had the present prime minister hauled up.

With such antecedents and on such rudimentary resources the young widowed Maneka, fairly homeless, is expected to eke out her future—if there are any believers who will buy her hard luck story. And there undoubtedly are. In the six-city snap poll conducted by INDIA TODAY last week, a majority sympathised with her.

YET believing anything in the capital the last fortnight had become a bizarre business: who would have believed, for instance the virulent exchanges that took place between Mrs Gandhi, Maneka and Maneka's sister Ambika the day she was "thrown out" of Safdarjung Road? Who would have believed the intemperate accusations and counter-accusations unless they appeared in print? Most of all who would believe that the prime minister's staff, in stories circulated by UNI, could put out defences of such infantile intelligence that they only implicated the prime minister further?

Accusing Akbar Ahmed, sponsor of the Lucknow convention, of trying to sabotage the Uttar Pradesh Rajya Sabha election being held at the same time, one such UNI report on April 4, accused him "and his friends. . . . (of) indulging in a witch-hunt of these aides of Mrs Gandhi and alleging that they are misleading the prime minister".

"Witch-hunt?" says Maneka, her eyebrows clicking up much like her mother-in-law's used to during the Janata regime at the sound of the same word, "tell me, just tell me, how can a 25-year-old, sitting in a hotel room, carry out a witch-hunt against the prime minister and her government?" Since she refuses all personal press interviews, "India's other Mrs Gandhi" as *Newsweek* called her, only meets the press if they come armed with accusations from the opposing camp which she claims she will refute.

Accusation: As for her mother-accusing her of using "bad langua behaving in "an indifferent and manner" Maneka trots out with harmless stories of her "irreverence"— of such innocent, schoolgirlish it is hard to imagine it is the mind penning the furious, bitter, little epistles that have checked the minister on the front page of newspa

Other accusations, of her links Rashtriya Swyamsewak Sangh (RSS), t Dal, with opposition leaders like Bahuguna and George Fernande answered with the same tone of m Mrs Gandhi applies when facing charges. Of her friendship with Vasu Raje, daughter of Bharatiya Janata (BJP) leader Rajmata Vijaya Raje Sci Gwalior, who was instrumental in the sale to BJP members, Maneka is apt the tables with measured candour come on!" she says kiddingly. Vasundhara is a close personal friend you really want to know she was in of the house long before I met her. She fact a friend of Rajiv and Sonia's family friend."

Maneka's protagonists—and they growing number even among the public who are eager to show sympa the underdog daughter-in-law ignor

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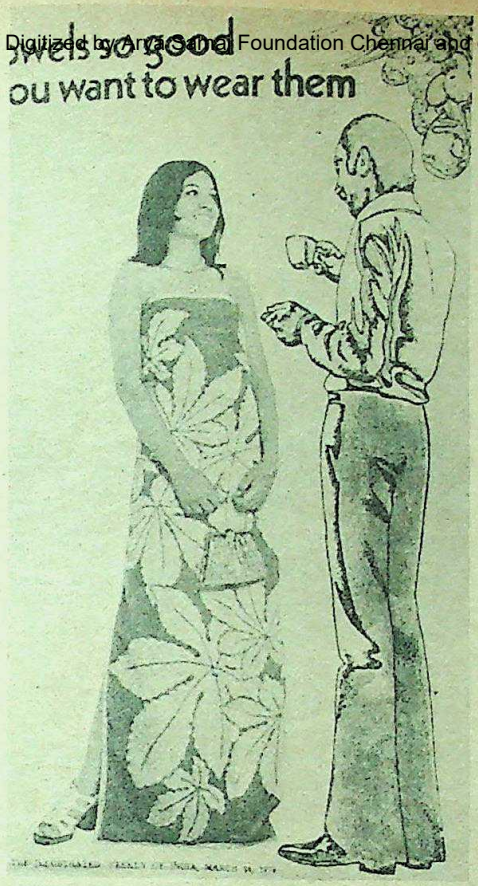
...hrown out" of her family home—are ...of horror stories about the indignities ...ed upon her at Safdarjung Road follo... Sanjay's death. "Even war widows are ...leged people in this country," snaps a ...d, recounting instances of how she was ...stently cut to size and finally "hounded

Thwarted: Maneka herself has given the ...s two instances of how her mother-in-... she says, prevented her from taking up ...ccupation after her husband's death. In ...first, although she was elected president ...n animal hosital in old Delhi, she was ...d not to accept the job. Instead, she was ...n money from the Sanjay Memorial ...d to start a new animal hospital on her ... In the second, when she proposed to ...spaper owner K.K. Birla that she start a ...magazine for him, he agreed on the ...dition that her mother-in-law gave the ...ission. Mrs Gandhi refused.

It is also a fact that soon after Sanjay's ...h Mrs Gandhi had offered Maneka the ...of becoming her personal secretary. ...n Maneka accepted, the offer was ...drawn on the grounds that Sonia, her ...n sister-in-law who over the years has ...blished a particularly close rapport with ...prime minister and frequently travels ...ad with her on official trips, objected to ...neka taking over. She was not ...ouraged at public occasions; instead her ...ements were curtailed, her mail ...ured, her telephones tapped. Listening ...Maneka's protagonists is a convincing ...ience.

Only partial truths can be uncovered ...n her own story which, like all political ...s of woe, has its moments of expediency, ...rtful scheming and synthetic naivete. The ...must be infer... or put together ...n her own past. ... widespread ...tion ranged for ...against her, Man... is already an in...ingly political

Transformation: ...not precisely the ...convenient mo... to recall the fun...g but always am...us teenager who ...modelling towels ...a major Delhi ...h Mills campaign ...974. Or the tran...ation that took ...e once she mar... Sanjay. "She was ...ys a highly intelli... slightly arrogant



Maneka as DCM model: initial exposure

creature," says a friend from her last days at school in Sanawar, "there seemed even then, no question in her mind that, like the Gandhis, she was born to rule. Once she married one it became a certainty." Almost immediately after her entry into Safdarjung Road—Sanjay and she were married in September 1974, having met less than a year earlier at a wedding—she began to acquire new friends. She hardly saw many of her cousins and family members who were too awed by her new-found status; her immediate family of mother, younger sister Ambika and brother Viren she drew closer to herself.

Born in 1956, the eldest of three children of Lt-Col T.S. Anand, a gentle, uninspiring army officer, Maneka's closest ally since childhood was her headstrong, often ruthlessly ambitious mother. Amteshwar came from a distinguished background but carried a chip on her shoulder: as the youngest child of Sir Datar Singh, a renowned agriculturist, later adviser to the Home Ministry, she had always felt that she had married beneath her station.

Endowed neither with the good looks of her older sister nor with the wealth her brothers were liable to inherit as sons, Amteshwar never took her mild-mannered husband seriously; nor did her children. She quit her husband to go and teach in a boarding school in Gwalior. Bent upon making her mark in life, she often tried to chalk out an independent course till Sanjay's discovery of Maneka.

Rapidly Amteshwar patched up her rocky marriage and settled to accumulate assets. In pursuit of their common penchant for power, the mother-daughter team started *Surya* in late 1976, as their foray into conquering a share of the profitable media market. Naturally, there was no scarcity of eager advertisers in the beginning.

Tough Style: Maneka was with Sanjay throughout the fatal election of 1977. She was witness to her husband's meteoric rise at the country's controls, and she now saw his ambition defeated. "Sanjay only began to care for me after he lost the election," she is said to have remarked to a friend later of her early years of marriage. It was with the onset of the Janata Government that Maneka triumphed in her own style, showing her mettle.

Overnight she converted *Surya* into a broadsheet of the most outrageously scurrilous variety, with salacious exposures of Janata politicians jostling with loud public relations for the Gandhis. As a scandal-buster of spurious effect, *Surya* despite its dwindling income, became synonymous with Maneka's private brand of muck-raking. It exposed her aggressive, hard-bitten capacity

Sanjay and Maneka at their wedding: first taste of power

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for survival in tough times—another characteristic picked up from her husband and mother-in-law's political resilience.

"Sanjay taught me never to lose my sense of humour at the most difficult times," Maneka admits freely today. "At the worst of times, the day Mrs Gandhi was arrested or the day they took him in, we would always laugh and joke about it." Some of that training paid off by January 1980, when the Gandhis were back in the saddle, and it is paying off today when she is branching out on her own.

Parody: As of now, to use her favourite qualifying phrase, she sees her role as more than that of continuing nuisance value to Mrs Gandhi and her government. As Arun Shourie has pointed out in the *Indian Express*: "For the moment Maneka has to do little. If the recent past is any guide, Mrs Gandhi will transform the little into a lot. When some unfortunate girl is next burnt for dowry, Maneka will just have to visit the bereaved parents, she'll just have to walk over to the next Harijan carnage to dramatise the state of law and order in Mrs Gandhi's India and to needle Mrs Gandhi into something rash. She'll just have to visit the site of the next train accident to puncture the claims of efficiency . . . Maneka can singlehanded and alone reduce many of Mrs Gandhi's standard ploys into a parody."

Maneka in 1980: capable of out Gandhiing Mrs. Gandhi?

That she sees the parody of the situation and uses the word frequently herself is indication enough of what her immediate role will be. Asked where she thinks she will go from here, Maneka smiles, half in derision and half self-deprecation. "Where do you think I can go?" Akbar Ahmed, her present backer who has led the revolt with her, insists that Maneka and he require no ammunition for their immediate political progress. Speaking to journalists minutes before she came out to address the convention in Lucknow, Ahmed said: "Sanjay started out with 11 MLAs, he had nobody with him. I don't even require those."

Says a fence-sitting Congress(I) MP, a former member of Sanjay's brigade, who has just seen light: "Who knows? Maybe she'll find a Dumpy in every state." Like several other members of the Sanjay gang, he is silently eating his heart out, having made public his censure of Maneka's move through one of the customary statements that are flooding newspaper offices these days. Silence, after the initial condemnation, in fact, has come to invade the rank of Congress(I) politicians.

Future Moves: Having made the first move—the first, that is, of the four that Sanjay taught her to plan as advance strategy—Maneka will only point to the rising pile of daily mail that accrues on her desk. It cannot be said, whatever her political future may amount to, that her first move was ill-timed or faulty. Months after her husband's death when one of Khushwant Singh's possibly harmless but picturesque expressions comparing her to Durga astride a tiger swelled into a "draft-Maneka" drama, there was no follow-up by her amidst the din.

Indeed, at that stage it seemed there would be no action forthcoming on the Maneka front. The poor wilting widow would be consigned to some backroom of the Safdarjung Road barrack, to-ing and fro-ing from her harmless little bookshop and her animal hospital. She was not even a trustee of the powerful Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Trust, handed over to a "reliable" family member, Arun Nehru. In fact, her fate was sealed temporarily when it turned out that she was underage by a few months—to stand for the Amethi seat left vacant by her husband. And the allied rumour that Mrs Gandhi would afford Maneka some other political sinecure, like the presidentship of the Youth Congress(I), has only recently been proved true in one of absurd statements apparently em[illegible] from the prime minister's house, th[illegible] attributes it to Maneka and her mo[illegible]

For one who shared the Sanjay [illegible] of glory trimmed with ignominy, participated actively in all politics of Sanjay era, who partook of the fa[illegible] political decisions, who actually ma[illegible] crucial telephone call to Arun Nehru a[illegible] him if he would like to be an [illegible] who personally canvassed with the [illegible] minister for election tickets for [illegible] like Kalpnath Rai, the worst [illegible] tion of life after Sanjay was [illegible] tical oblivion.

NOT for a single minute si[illegible] crashed in the Pitts aircraft th[illegible] morning of 1980 has Maneka s[illegible] regarding Rajiv as an innocent abro[illegible] politics—at lea[illegible] comparison to [illegible] The attitude, [illegible] she has frankly [illegible] cussed often wi[illegible] ends in private [illegible] versations, is [illegible] pounded by pe[illegible] prejudice [illegible] Rajiv and his [illegible] from the time [illegible] marriage.

The two br[illegible] had never been [illegible] cularly close in [illegible] years, and with [illegible] jay's growing in[illegible] ment in politics [illegible] drifted apart to [illegible] point of anim[illegible] though they [illegible] nued to live in [illegible] same house. Th[illegible] sisters-in-law ha[illegible] less to say to [illegible] other; in fact th[illegible] ionship bordered on the blatantly a[illegible] nistic, both being creatures of totally [illegible] ing sensibilities.

Watching Rajiv's faltering entry [illegible] politics, quite literally into the se[illegible] husband had left empty, seeing S[illegible] political allies being slowly sidestepp[illegible] in fact a conscious de-Sanjayfication [illegible] place in the party, Maneka felt the ti[illegible] came to act. In recent months she ha[illegible] to compare, more and more vocifer[illegible] the glaringly different operating styles [illegible] brothers.

Worse still, she believed her mo[illegible] law, without Sanjay as a constant che[illegible] confidante, was losing her grip on par[illegible] government affairs. "Sanjay's whole [illegible] was to unite and rule. His loyalists re[illegible]

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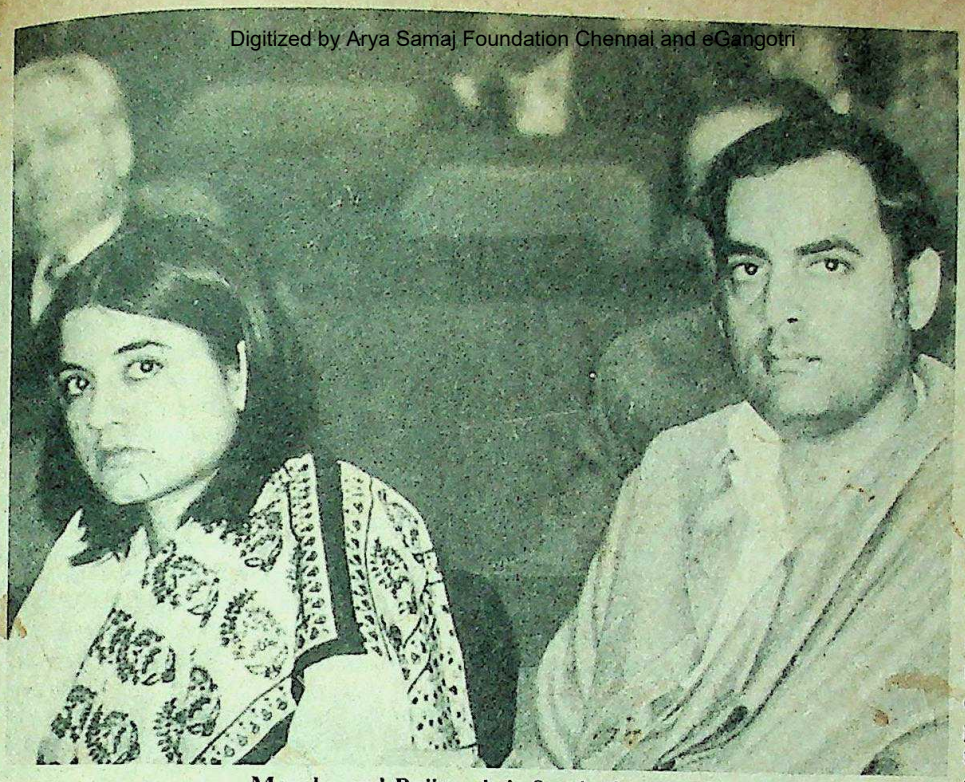

Maneka and Rajiv: who's first in the queue?

its very existence to her ...the Maneka episode should spur them (Mrs Gandhi and Rajiv) on to deal firmly with undesirable elements which crept into the organisation at a particularly awkward time in Mrs Gandhi's career."

Grotesque Drama: Clearly then, the Maneka factor, with its potential, subliminal implications for Mrs Gandhi, is inseparably tied to the hereditary factor. Her periodic protestations notwithstanding, it is a Gordian knot that cannot but form the centre-piece in the grotesque family drama being played out before a huge and expectant audience. At this stage of Mrs Gandhi's career, even her naivest supporters cannot deny the fact that the prime minister will not settle for anything less than dynastic rule.

At this stage of Mrs Gandhi's career, even her naivest supporters cannot deny the fact that the prime minister will not settle for anything less than dynastic rule.

She is utterly, if erroneously, convinced that only the Nehru family can rule this vast country effectively. Nehru's legacy to her must be passed on to her progeny. At one stage, the anointed crown prince was Sanjay and all the fawning courtiers paid him the requisite homage. With his passing, the mantle has fallen on another pilot who wears it with uncomfortable grace.

If Rajiv had been anything like Sanjay, it is obvious that Maneka would have been committing political hara-kiri by bucking her illustrious in-laws. Her impetuous actions, therefore, acquire added significance if only because of its timing. Rajiv is currently trapped in a dilemma. He has the power and the blessings of his mother, but lacks the grit, recklessness and dominating nature that appears essential to being accepted in a party as hair-trigger tense as the ruling party.

Wretched State: Against that background, Maneka's defiance, and the skeletons she is capable of unearthing, whether real or imagined, threaten to do irreparable harm to a party already totally dependant on the person it is aimed against—Mrs Gandhi. It is a wretched state of affairs that allows a family squabble to cast aspersions on the ability of a prime minister to govern a country. It is worse when dirty linen washed in public passes for affairs of state. Yet, it is hardly surprising, for in no uncertain terms has Mrs Gandhi determined that the future of the country is interwoven with her future and that of her progeny, and that all institutions and traditions in India must subserve that cardinal principle.

If the Maneka affair is to be restrained as a nine-day wonder, then clearly the time has come for strong departures, for bold moves that will put institutions right, set parties on wholesome political traditions and give steel to institutions ruthlessly worn to pulp. It is by no means an easy task. Nor will it be popular in a system which has been bullied, cajoled and pushed into the groove in which it now moves, falteringly and even ineffectively. It is the stuff which gives family affairs precedence over national affairs, gives substance to gossip and belittles the statute of democratic governance. —SUNIL SETHI

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MAHARASHTRA

State Of Distress

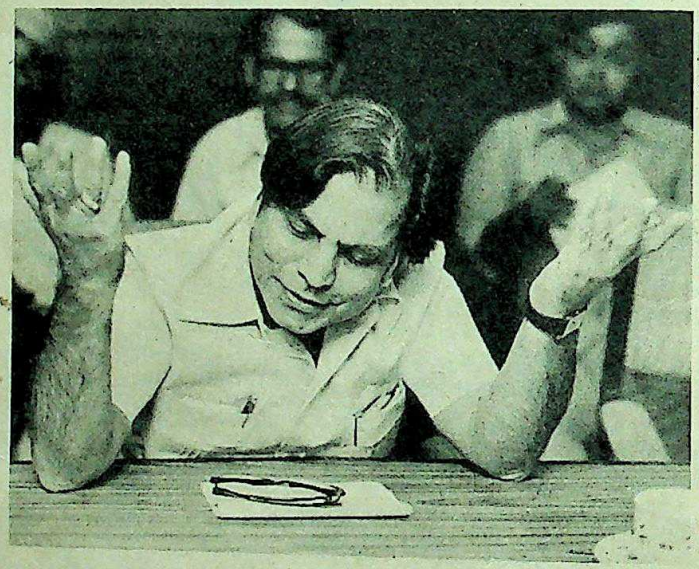
THERE was a showdown last fortnight. And, true to her skill at the poker game of politics, it was Mrs Gandhi who suddenly and unexpectedly called the bluff, and won. The final exorcism of Abdul Rehman Antulay, the controversial former chief minister of Maharashtra provides an object lesson in Mrs Gandhi's tigress-like proficiency in stalking her quarry, wearing him out and then destroying him in one fell swoop.

For two months since his exit from office following an adverse judgment by the Bombay High Court, Antulay had been consciously building up a myth of invincibility and turning all the advantages to himself in a battle of nerves with his successor and Mrs Gandhi's nominee, Babasaheb Anantrao Bhosale. While he remained judiciously in the background, dropping only a few suggestive hints here and there, and getting a few Bombay press barons subservient to him to complete the rest of the job, Bhosale before long lost all his defence.

Sullied Reputation: A smear-campaign begun by known Antulay-supporters first sullied Bhosale's moral reputation by tending to pre-judge him on a case still pending before court. Later on an atmosphere was masterfully created so that even Bhosale's own staff at Mantralaya, the state secretariat, began to believe that the new chief minister was indeed a passing phenomenon. Only two weeks ago, a state intelligence official confided to INDIA TODAY: "There are some (intelligence) reports which go only to Antulay even now. A lot of people feel that he'll come back to power as soon as he is absolved by the court." So strong was the popular fantasy that everyone could 'feel' Antulay would win his cases while Bhosale would lose his.

Mrs Gandhi chose her moment to intervene. Soon after her return from London late last month, she personally directed Bhosale to remove from chairmanship of the giant Maharashtra Road Transport Corporation (annual turnover: Rs 380 crore) Suresh Jain, MLA, a well-known Antulay loyalist and the man whose Marine Drive flat Antulay is currently occupying. It was a typical move, but before calling out—"show"—Mrs Gandhi was not quite playing blind. She apparently knew that Antulay had very limited cards.

Antulay still remained in the background, but committed the vital mistake of giving Jain the green signal to kick up a shindy. Jain, who is a Marwari from the backward Wardha region of the state, and more an impetuous businessman than a politician, set out on the suicidal course of collecting signatures against Bhosale. A day before the campaign was to start Union Finance Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, arrived in Bombay. His brief was to divert



Bhawan Singh

Antulay: the final exorcism

"My conscience is clean"

Antulay from the path of confrontation.

Stiff Warning: In Bombay he dined with Antulay, met key Antulay-supporters such as Jawaharlal Darda, former industry minister and Jain's father-in-law, Ramrao Adik, former finance minister, and Gulabrao Patil, president of the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress(I) Committee (MPCC-I). Though he had ostensibly gone to Bombay, as he later told INDIA TODAY, to "bring about a rapprochement", the word soon spread that he actually carried a stiff warning from the prime minister against anyone affixing his signature to Jain's campaign.

Next day, Jain discovered to his dismay that the MLAs who had promised to support him two days earlier were now going back on their commitment. A source close to Ar observed in New Delhi: "When the me andum against Bhosale was drafted w firm commitment from about 180 M But a day after Pranab Mukherjee's only nine MLAs were ready to on it."

At one stroke, the bubble of Antu popularity was lanced; it made him tak seat with the large array of the Congress "would-be rebels" who have learnt heavy personal cost the futility of revo against Mrs Gandhi or her chosen pe with the help of party insiders. Two after Mukherjee's visit, Premlatai Chav Rajya Sabha member, and former MP president and Antulay's anathema, re Bombay. Obviously emboldened by Gandhi herself, she whipped up a cou campaign—this time in favour Bhosale—which drew in an overwhe 200 of the 235 Congress(I) le lators.

Marked Contrast: It w this psychological moment both Bhosale and Antulay summoned to Delhi, one the other. There was a ma contrast in their behav When Bhosale met the pres round, bulbous eyes gleaming with excitemen declared that he was "s behind" Mrs Gandhi and Gandhi and that the entire ngress(I) Legislature Par its turn, was "solidly be him. He announced that would not be able to m "more than two signature cluding his own". Who was other person? Was he An Adding a note of my Bhosale said, "Truth is not spoken always." Would he Antulay as chairman Maharashtra Irrigation lopment Corporation" came the reply: "I'm yet to revie performance." Would he expand his C to assuage the feelings of some disgr elements? "What's the hurry?" At the the press conference, Bhosale walke several inches taller, a picture o assurance and confidence. Such is the of what Congressmen of Bhosale's ilk describe as Mrs Gandhi's "blessings".

Antulay, on the other hand, flew in capital unheralded, almost in a s fashion. He checked into his favourite star hotel in Delhi but left instructions the front-desk, as he often does, to de he was there. On April 7, he went to s prime minister; after a disastrous 25-m meeting he flew out of the room with a

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...ch P.G. Wodehouse would have de-...ed as that of a survivor from an ex-...sion in a tomato cannery.

To a waiting newsman's anti-climatic ...tion as to whether he would help the ...gress(I) in its campaign for the impend-... Assembly elections, he gnashed his teeth ...quipped: "I was an AICC general sec-...ry. I know what to do and what not to ...No first-hand report of what was ...ussed between Antulay and Mrs Gandhi ...ailable; but both Bombay and New ...hi are buzzing with rumours that the ...harashtra Government might be asked to ...permission to anyone wishing to sue ...ulay individually to go ahead if he did ...desist from the course of confrontation.

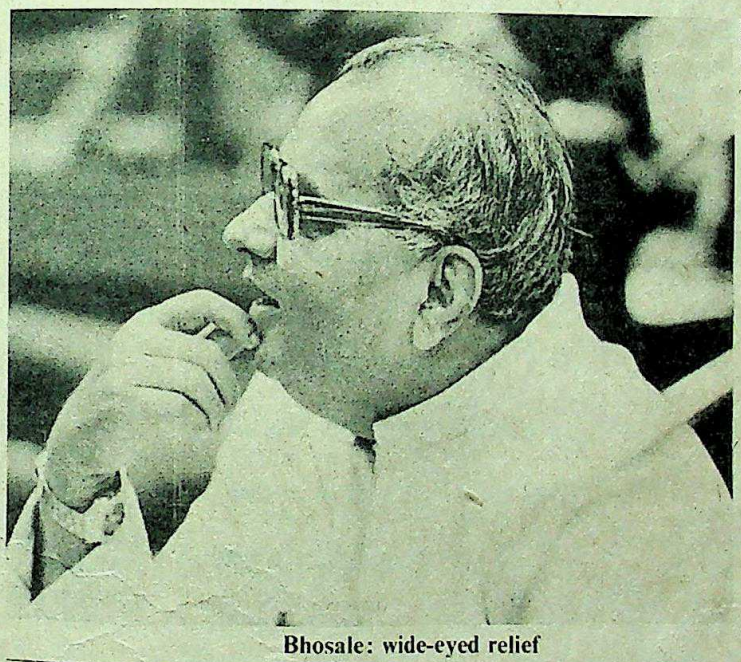
Supporters Silenced: The discomfiture ...Antulay completely silenced his erstwhile ...porters. Permanand Awale, a minister in ...Antulay cabinet, who had only a few ...s ago requested Maharash-... Speaker Sharad Dighe to ...nge certain remarks made ...Bhosale from the Assembly ...eedings, suddenly became ...conciliatory in his tone. ...the battering ram of the ...ulay lobby, was discreetly ...Darda was suddenly not ...able for comment. Gulab-... Patil was cowering under ...threat of losing the MPCC(I) ...dentship any day. The ...ulay camp had never looked ...moralised since he came to ...er in 1980.

By one stroke of her ham-... Mrs Gandhi was able to ...k out a bad tooth; but the ...truth is that the gum still ...urates, bleeds and pains. ...sale, the corpulent, garru-... small-town politician ca-...ted to the elevated chair ...chief ministership of the ...try's richest state, has nei-... the skill nor the charisma ...in an administration spinning out of ...rol.

Maharashtra has been going downhill ...e 1980 when Antulay took over as the ...minister. He came to symbolise an ...itive, self-interested but outwardly ...amic' politics, the only likeness of which ...be found in the Emergency-time coterie-... of Sanjay Gandhi. But, since August last ...when Antulay's trust rackets were ...ed, the state was adrift.

Asphyxiating Climate: The wounds in-...ed on it by acts of commission gave way ...those caused by acts of omission. As the ...financial year folded up, it was left with ...unprecedented budgetary deficit of Rs 25 ...e, a record overdraft from the Reserve Bank of India of Rs 200 crore, an internal revenue collection depleted by 23 per cent, a demoralised bureaucracy, and an asphyxiating climate for investment and business. Said Nusli Wadia, chairman of Bombay Dyeing: "Though as a businessman I've no axe to grind in politics I must say that the present political instability in Maharashtra is ruinous for its economy."

Wadia, a discreet businessman endowed with a sharp political antenna, would have known more than anyone else how ruinous the instability had become for business and economy. The strike in Bombay's 60 textile mills, already 90 days old, has caused losses of Rs 350 crore, which is 10 per cent of the total output of the mill sector for the entire country. The 250,000 workers have lost wages to the tune of Rs 23 crore, and droves of destitute workers are leaving the city from Victoria Terminus every day.



Bhawan Singh

Bhosale: wide-eyed relief

"Truth is not to be spoken always"

Apparently B.M. Gaikwad, the septuagenarian labour minister in the Bhosale Cabinet, has no control over the striking union led by militant labour leader Datta Samant. Said Gaikwad: "Datta Samant's strike is illegal. What else can I say?"

Very little indeed. Last year, out of every five lost man-days in India in the organised sector, one was in Maharashtra. At one stage this year, a staggering 2,000 shops and establishments in Bombay were closed because of labour unrest and the failure of the state Government's conciliation machinery to intervene in time. Said Arvind Lalbhai, former president of the powerful Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI): "The degeneration of Maharashtra as the leading business state of the country is pathetic."

THE echoes are bound to reverberate throughout the country. This is because of the state's pivotal place in the country's economy: 19.3 per cent of the country's daily factory attendance is clocked in Maharashtra; 24.2 per cent of the gross output in the factory sector is confined to the state; 22.2 per cent of Indian joint stock companies are registered in Maharashtra; 12.7 per cent of the national income is grossed in this state. The share of Maharashtra in the total number of industrial licences issued in the country, after declining steeply from its 1979 level of 30.5 per cent, still rested on the highly impressive mark of 24 per cent in 1981. Said Gaur Hari Singhania of the J.K. group of industries: "If Maharashtra catches a cold the whole of India sneezes."

Antulay put Maharashtra in a state of coma by demonstrating, one after-another, the vulnerability of each of its institutions. As the prime lieutenant of Mrs Gandhi for the 1980 Assembly elections, it is Antulay who had given nominations to most of the party MLAs. And at no time in the past was the Congress Legislature Party so entirely devoid of talent and so completely wedded to mammonism.

For instance, the number of graduates in the Assembly has never been so low since the creation of the state in 1960. Nor has there ever been such a large concentration in the Congress Legislature Party of opportunistic businessmen, self-seekers and men without any record of involvement in popular movements. "Antulay's friends among the MLAs take after him in every way," said Sharad Pawar, Congress(S) president, the former chief minister of the state who is still among the more resourceful politicians of Bombay.

Undistinguished Bunch: The 'Antulayites' among the Maharashtra MLAs are a curious lot. Says Om Prakash Behal, MLA from Colaba, in the heart of Bombay: "Antulay saheb is a genius. I've never seen a person more dynamic than him." 'Dynamic' is the catch-word in the ritual of Antulay-worship, and Behal mouths this sitting at Bombay's Khyber restaurant, which he owns. Says Satish Pednekar, MLA from Parel who walks on crutches: "Antulay is the hope of the millions." The former chief minister was certainly Pednekar's 'hope',

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A.R. ANTULAY

'I'm Not A Rebel'

Antulay in Jain's Bombay flat: "nobody is honest"

ABDUL Rehman Antulay, like all politicians given to fantasies, loves to think of himself as a busy man, even when he is out of office. When he is sleeping, or chatting, his secretary always tells callers that he is busy in a meeting. But he is slowly getting adjusted to a life of more leisure after vacating office in January last. He even says he is planning an autobiography, a valedictory act in a political career. Sitting in the rather small and cluttered-up Marine Drive flat of Suresh Jain, which he occupies now ("I sold my Bombay flat and am building a house in my native village; I'm not a city bird"), Antulay spoke at length to INDIA TODAY *Correspondent* SUMIT MITRA. *Excerpts:*

Q. It's a nice flat, but a bit too small. Aren't you feeling somewhat cramped?

A. Thanks for your concern. Are you referring to my big official house? Did I meet you there? *Varsha* (the Maharashtra chief minister's official residence) is a very big house. But I've no difficulty here. My wife and my children are used to living under all conditions.

Q. Some of your adversaries here say that Bhosale is under orders from the Congress(I) High Command to slow-poison you politically.

A. If by the Congress(I) High Command, you have Shrimati Gandhi or Rajiv Gandhi in view you are absolutely wrong. Indeed you'll be completely mistaken in your belief if you give credence to what these know-alls said. I have always been convinced that my loyalty is beyond question and above suspicion. Hence if any advice has been tendered to the chief minister in regard to me it is not to 'slow-poison' me but to administer political Vitamin B. But by High Command if you mean those busybodies in the corridors of power in Delhi who were not even seen before the Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh elections were over in 1978, then I can believe you even if you tell me that they had advised some very rapid poisoning. Because they simply cannot tolerate men like me who are proud to have publicly and fearlessly supported Shrimati Gandhi in her worst days. They are simply jealous of me.

Q. Some people say that you're behind Maneka Gandhi and Akbar Ahmed.

A. I knew Maneka Gandhi as the wife of my friend and leader, the late Sanjay Gandhi. That's all. I have never seen this Akbar Ahmed or 'Dumpy' in my life. I learnt his name only a few weeks back from the pages of *Indian Express*. I remember the name because it sounds funny.

Q. The general impression in the country is that it is you who began a culture of* quid pro quo *in Bombay. Are you aware of it?

A. I won't comment on matters that are *sub judice*.

Do you sincerely believe that the chief minister of Maharashtra, who is really the second-most important political functionary in the country, will soil his hands with cement and alcohol?

Q. Only cement is* sub judice. *Not other things, like alcohol.

A. You amuse me.

Q. I'm sorry if I've offended you. But the general impression is that you created artificial shortages in alcohol and then selectively restored the cuts on the quotas of some distilleries—for a consideration, of course.

A. It's nice you're saying all these outrageous things, and that too to my face. But I marvel at the ingenuity of these complainants. Do you sincerely believe that the chief minister of Maharashtra, who is really the second-most important political functionary in the country, will soil his hands with cement and alcohol if he really intends to make money?

Q. What would he do?

A. He'll not touch small things. He will appear to be honest, scrupulously honest, to at least 1,000 people who might come to him for favours and with the promise of payments. They in turn will tell one million people that a saint has come to the chief minister's office of Maharashtra, a man as hard and clean as porcelain.

Q. So?

A. (*Rising from seat, moving towards the balcony overlooking the city's luminous, crescent-shaped skyline.*) He will make money by clearing seven cream applications for increased Floor Space Index, seven cream applications for exemption under Urban Land Ceiling, by clearing objections to new industrial projects. He will not touch sugarcane, cement—those small, unclean things.

Q. That sounds like a complete philosophy.

A. Yes. Because that's what I was aware of from the first day in office, and that's what I always avoided. While my predecessor cleared 700 No Objection Certificates I cleared not even seven. And that too to needy persons, to widows and indigent ones. I'd have become the richest person in the country if I'd cleared just five applications for NOC in Backbay Reclamation.

Q. How do you feel being out of office?

A. (*Relaxes*) Oh, my conscience is clean. I've a sense of fulfilment. I've done a service to the poor, as also to Shrimati Gandhi and her party.

Q. Are they the same thing?

A. Absolutely, absolutely. Please write that I'm not a rebel.

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State bureaucrats waiting with files outside Congress(I) party office: hamstrung by history

humour. But for most of them the change is too sudden, and their lingering if not surreptitious admiration for Antulay is a product of their unwillingness to change their habits. Admits Adik: "An MLA in Maharashtra is not used to waiting in front of an official's cabin. He has to do that now. It was never like this earlier."

But Bhosale, in his turn is hamstrung by history; even if he survives the court case (see INDIA TODAY, March 31) dangling over his head like the sword of Damocles, he will find it impossible to galvanise a herd of MLAs handpicked by Antulay in 1980. In Antulay's cabinet, Bhosale was a timid backbencher: the chief minister used to push him around whenever he was pleased to do so. Bhosale lost the transport portfolio because Jain, as the State Road Transport Corporation chairman, complained against him to Antulay.

Observers remember that on the day of Justice Lentin's crucial judgment, which finally led to Antulay's ouster, Bhosale called on him with the request that he should not be thrown out of his official quarters too soon after the ministry collapses because, "I don't have a big enough place to stay in Bombay." Shy of fighting, withdrawn, full of escapist humour—these are some of the remarks one encounters about Bhosale.

Continuing Practices: Naturally, there is no indication so far that Bhosale can revamp the state with bold measures and new ideas backed by a new leadership. For instance, he has persisted with the Antulay-era practice of creating artificial shortages and restrictions, thus allowing a flourishing monkey-business of trade-offs and considerations.

Thus NOCs under the Land Ceiling Act and for FSI are still being allegedly allowed in exchange for under-the-table payments; the chief minister still retains the power to exempt new constructions from the Ceiling Act; the distilleries in the state still come under an unconscionable order, passed by Antulay, restricting their quota of alcohol, and thus triggering premia on "special restoration of quota"; at the lowest level, even a paltry sum of two rupees is charged by partymen a certificate for ration cards.

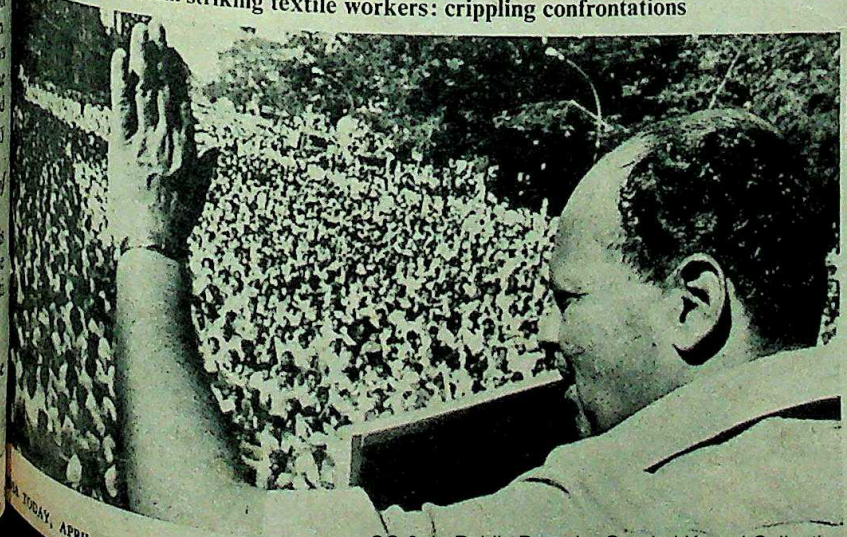
Bombay had always been a city of big political rake-ins, a perpetual eldorado for political parties. But, in earlier times, money came in around elections and with no discernible strings attached to it. Says one of the pioneers of the sugar cooperative movement in the state, who is a Congress(I) MP now: "The cooperative leaders gave money to the Congress election coffers and disappeared, never to come back asking for favours."

It changed during the late V.P. Naik's tenure when the Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee (BPCC) emerged as the conduit for political funds. The earliest monument to the city's *quid pro quo* culture was ironically salvaged from the bottom of the sea—the Backbay Reclamation—where the new Assembly building stands and most of whose builders paid money to the ruling party to secure the highly treasured NOCs.

Antulay only added to it a touch of his personal recklessness, audacity and derring-do. "Nobody is honest," he fumes now. Perhaps he is right. In the post-Antulay era, Bombay continues to be what Andre Malraux called it a bazaar not a city.

—SUMIT MITRA in Bombay

Samant with striking textile workers: crippling confrontations



Pramod Pushkarna

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THE OPPOSITION

The Vaudeville Act

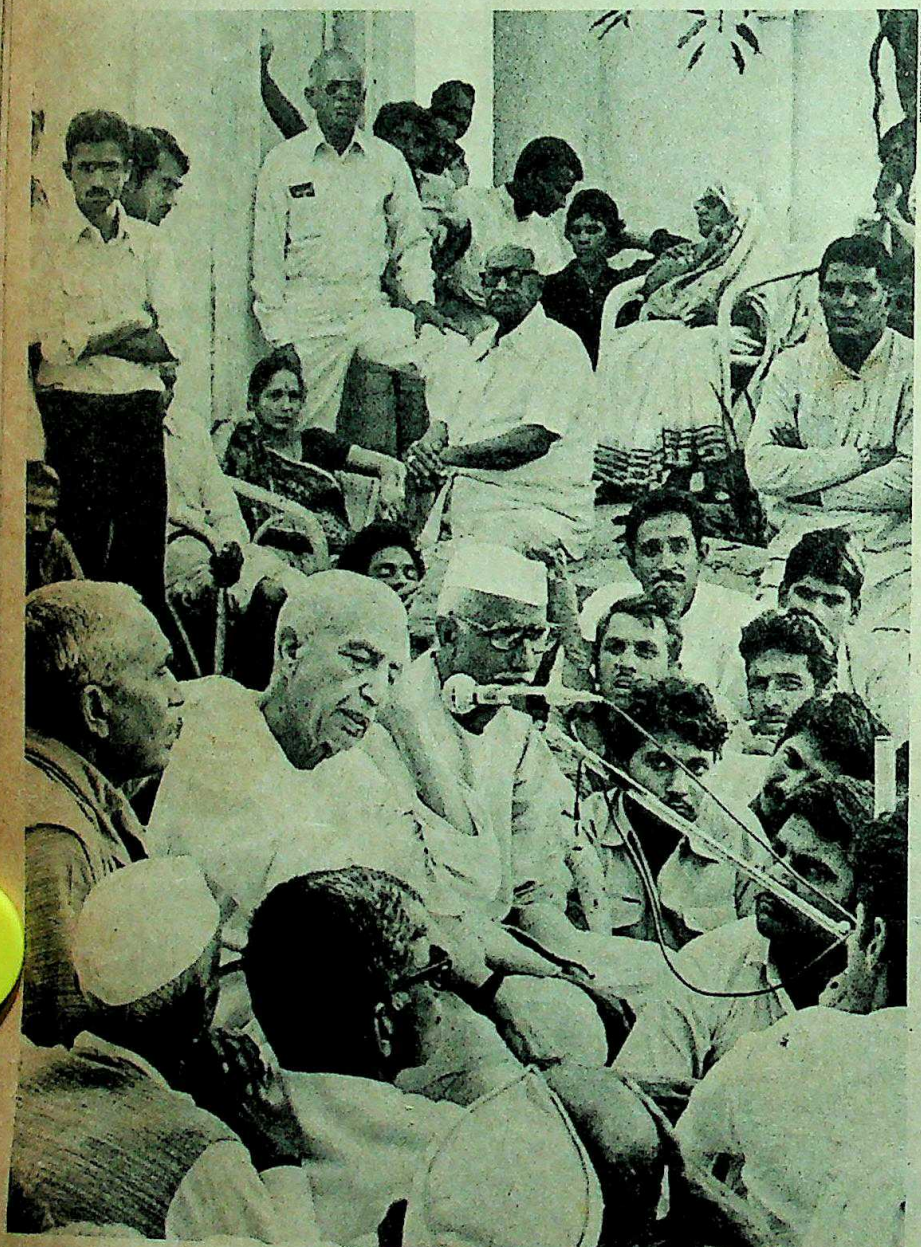
TIME, for Mrs Gandhi, was of the essence. Like a well programmed computer giving out the blips at the most opportune moment she ordered polls in three states under her control—Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana. A few more weeks of hesitation would have meant her forgoing the gilt-edged opportunity of training her guns at a fragmented, dispirited and dazed Opposition desperately trying to regroup but unable to shake off its mutual mistrust.

The Opposition almost played into her hands. Charan Singh, Lok Dal chairman and that indefatigable political comedian provided her with the much-needed vaudeville sequence by first retiring from politics and then withdrawing his decision. Between the two acts, he, like the temperamental second wife of Indian folklore threw out of the party Haryana's principal vote-catcher, Devi Lal, the party's time-tested sugar-daddy, Biju Patnaik and Rajasthan's sole organisation man, Kumbh Ram Arya. In the course of his antics, Singh ground to pulp whatever was left of the credibility of the non-Left Opposition country.

The Opposition could not have more fragmented on the eve of the poll as Mrs Gandhi was sending out inte sleuths and her party's observers various states to collect dossiers prospective aspirants for her party's her opponents were making a mock themselves. Charan Singh, the octoge patriarch of the Jat-dominated Lok entertained his followers at his 12 Tu Road residence with the choicest in against fellow Opposition leaders. Sa "Left to myself I will not even like to s most of the politicians. There is no pla gentlemen in politics." In sweeping re he described Morarji Desai as arro Janata Party chief Chandra Shekha dishonest and Babu Jagjivan Ram supporter of Mrs Gandhi's Emerg regime.

United Front: Indeed in the p Charan Singh had not only shot to pie hope of opposition unity, he also pave way for the fourth split in his own pa less than two years. Even as he perform recantation, last fortnight, 30 leaders Lok Dal, Janata Party and Congr including Chandra Shekhar, Sharad P Priya Ranjan Das Munshi, Ambika S George Fernandes, Biju Patnaik, Kar Thakur and Madhu Dandavate iss joint statement calling upon the va political groups for forging a united against the ruling party.

Before issuing the statement to press, Dandavate wrote a letter to S seeking his cooperation in their endea Charan Singh, who was earlier the P mover of the unity talks, suddenly devel cold feet because he saw in this attem move to sideline him from the leadersh the new political alliance. Instead appending his signature to the statem decided to strike back and in a dra



Pramod Pushkarna

Charan Singh announcing his 'retire (left) before sacking three party lieute two days later (below, from left) Patnaik Lal and Arya: antiquated antics

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(from left) Chandra Shekhar, Pawar, Munshi, Ambika Soni, Fernandes, Thakur and Dandavate: an endangered species

announced his decision to quit active ...s—only to recant some days later. ...ad Devi Lal, "Chaudhary Saheb never ...ved in collective leadership. His only ...ive throughout his life has been to ...m at the top of each political party. He ...done the maximum damage to the ...osition parties."

...Charan Singh's actions, confused the ...position ranks and one year's hard labour ...bringing together the non-communist ...ies other than Bharatiya Janata Party ...was wasted. In fact, it was in October last ...when Charan Singh initiated the unity ...which were later on supported by the ...a Party in its meeting held at ...medabad. During the last six months, ...an Singh and his emissaries including ...k and Devi Lal have been holding ...sions with the Janata Party and the ...gress(S) to arrive at some sort of ...erstanding. It was on the question of ...ership that the unity talks ultimately ...e down last fortnight.

Supporters of both Chandra Shekhar ...Charan Singh have openly accused each ...er of seeking the chairmanship of the ...posed party. Some Janata men have been ...ping for Morarji, while rural faction of ...Congress(S) put forward the names of ...ad Pawar and Devraj Urs. Not ...prisingly, there was also much buck ...g going on. Said Ram Krishna Hegde, ...general secretary of the Janata Party, "It ...fortunate that Charan Singh's episode ...ruck a severe blow to the Opposition ...s was gaining credibility in the wake of ...nal performance of the ruling party."

Reduced Chances: The entire episode has cast a shadow on the Opposition's chances. With the BJP and Lok Dal standing against each other the Opposition vote is likely to be fragmented yet again. Says Sikander Bakht, BJP's general secretary, "Any political adjustment without Charan Singh and BJP will not cut any ice with the electorate."

It was with good reason, then, that the BJP and Lok Dal leaders were making discreet attempts to launch another alliance against the one being organised by Janata Party. Curiously, BJP leaders were the first ones to not only call on Charan Singh after his announcement but also urged him to

Desai (top) and Ram: age before duty

cooperate with their party. An attempt was also made to rope in Babu Jagjivan Ram. Ram's Congress has built formidable inroads in Haryana. In fact, Charan Singh presided over Ram's 75 birthday function last fortnight. Says a Lok Dal leader, "With the charismatic leadership of Charan Singh, politicial shrewdness of Babuji and BJP's cadre, we can replace Mrs Gandhi within a short span of time."

In the rising cacophany of Opposition unity moves the Election Commission's announcement on the election date—May 19 for four states—fell with a clang. Congress(I) leaders bellowed confidently of the party's poll prospects. Crowed Vasantdada Patil the general secretary of the All India Congress(I) Committee, "My party will improve its position in all four states."

IN HARYANA the Congress(I) will benefit from the split in the Lok Dal but forfeit support from dissident Congress(I) politicians. Since Mrs Gandhi has retained Bhajan Lal as chief minister, the original Congress(I) leaders who fought Bhajan Lal in his previous Janata incarnation are likely to be denied tickets this time around.

At present in the 90-member state Assembly the party-wise break up is: Congress(I)-15 Lok Dal-22, BJP-11, Janata Party-4 and Congress(J)-1. With over 30 per cent Jat population and 23 per cent Harijan, Charan Singh-Jagjivan Ram combine can hope to win the elections, with the BJP's indirect support. The state party secretary has announced that ex-Janata men will be treated on par with other Congressmen for allotment of seats. The resulting resentment will mean that the Congress(I) and the Opposition will be evenly matched in the poll race.

Not even the most reckless gambler would put his money on a Congress(I) victory in West Bengal. If the Opposition can come together they can at best reduce the CPI-M-led Left Front's majority—but that is a very big 'if'. Efforts at unity presently centre around Prafulla Chandra Sen, the octogenarian Janata leader who is acceptable to all Congress(I) factions, the Congress(S) and the BJP.

Last fortnight, Rajiv Gandhi consulted all available Congress(I) leaders in New Delhi conversant with the West Bengal situation; he gave an impression that he was not prepared to concede a walk-over to the CPI-M. But his moves will founder on one question: how to shore up the morale of a bureaucracy which is reconciled to the Marxists' return to power. He gave a hint that the Union Tourism and Civil Aviation

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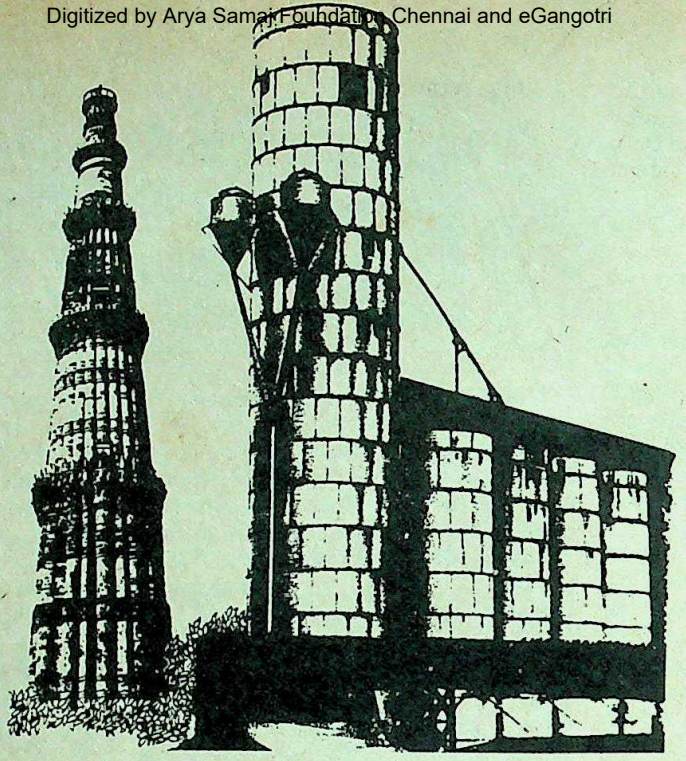

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Minister Anant Prasad Sharma would be
associated with the West Bengal polls, and his
task would be to convince the West Bengal
electorate that there was someone in Delhi
to look after its interest provided it did not
dance to the tune of the Left Front.

Rajiv backed up to the hilt the unity
drive of the non-Left parties. He was shown
the 1980 parliamentary polls figure which
underscored the fact that non-Left parties
could have won nine—and not four—seats
if vote-division been avoided. In terms of
assembly elections, nine parliamentary seats
means 72 Assembly seats. In fact, the
combined non-Left opposition scored more
than the Left candidates in 112 of the 294
assembly segments. Even so Congress(I)
candidates are scrambling for the few safe
seats.

Uncertainty: The CPI-M is far less sure of victory in Kerala where its main rival will be the Congress(I) leading a nine-party United Democratic Front which includes the majority section of the Congress(S) led by A.K. Antony. Two small parties, the Janata and the BJP (presently unrepresented in the Assembly) may hold the balance between the two fronts.

In Himachal Pradesh, the fight is between BJP and the Congress Party. In the 68-member Himachal Assembly the party-wise strength is: Congress(I)-38, BJP-24, JP-Independents-3 and two seats are vacant. Since 24 of the 38 Congress(I) members are defectors from the Janata Party and they are likely to fight for their renomination. With a solid backing of over 20 per cent Thakur says, Congress(I) is expected to return to power under the leadership of Thakur Ram Lal. Moreover, the disorganised BJP has not been able to organise its unity in the hilly state. BJP's central leadership is trying to woo some influential Thakur leaders from Himachal Pradesh to improve their poll prospects but their chances of success are said very low. The main stumbling block to Congress(I) victory is the inefficiency of the state Government.

In addition to the four state Assembly polls, the election commissioner also ordered elections for seven Lok Sabha seats including Garhwal. The six seats are Diamond Harbour (West Bengal), Thane (Maharashtra), Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh), Udaipur and Udaipur (Rajasthan), and Lohardoga (Bihar). The opposition leaders claim, barring Bayana and Lohardoga remaining five seats will go to them if they prevent the division of anti-Congress(I) votes by putting up a single candidate. But will they succeed in doing so? "Opposition parties are like railway platforms", as one put it, "where people come and go without being identified."

—PRABHU CHAWLA with bureau reports

RAJYA SABHA

Cross Purposes

DISSENSION in the ruling party's ranks is nothing new. But till the recently concluded Rajya Sabha poll it had seldom before affected the party's parliamentary strength. Despite the fragmented Opposition, one official candidate lost in Andhra Pradesh and another backed by the Congress(I) in Maharashtra, giving the party 49 seats—one more than before the poll—of the 69 Rajya Sabha members elected last month.

According to Congress(I) sources, over 80 MLAs in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh—one in 10—defied party directives. The maximum damage was caused in Andhra Pradesh where M.M. Hashim, a former minister, lost to opposition candidate P. Babul Reddy of the Janata Party. Reddy

Venkataram and V.P. Singh: jolted

polled 56 first preference votes. Since there are only 39 opposition legislators some obviously came from the ruling party which, with 254 members, was in fact capable of electing all its six candidates. Another Congress(I) candidate, L.N. Prasad, managed to scrape through only in the sixth round.

Dissatisfaction: The cross-voting was a symptom of the evident dissatisfaction with Chief Minister B. Venkataram, and some supporters of former chief ministers Chenna Reddy and T. Anjiah defied the party whip. Nor did the defection of four Congress(I) MLAs to matinee idol N.T. Rama Rao's new party help the ruling party.

In Maharashtra, where Union Industry Minister Narain Dutt Tiwari supervised the election, the ruling party put forward five candidates and supported one from Sripat Dange's All India Communist Party (AICP) in return for support from its two MLAs. Yet, the six candidates together were able to pull in only 223 first preference votes in spite of their combined strength of 238 in the Assembly, a clear indication that 15 MLAs defied the party whip. These wayward votes went to the Congress(S)'s Suresh Kalmadi who won in the second round of voting with 31 first preference votes instead of the 24 he expected and to the AICP's Bani Deshpande, whose score was 27 against the 19 he expected.

None of the Congress(I) candidates lost but M.C. Bhandare scraped through only in the last round of voting. The rebels are believed to be close supporters of the state's former chief minister A.R. Antulay and disaffected heavy-weights Shalinitai Patil and husband Vasantdada Patil. As one minister put it: "They tried to ensure the defeat of at least one official candidate. If five more MLAs had voted for Deshpande, Bhandare would have lost."

Novel Protest: In Uttar Pradesh, 16 MLAs went against their party's interest in a novel protest against the high command's style of functioning: they deliberately invalidated their votes. Through all the party's nine candidates finally romped home, only two polled their allotted votes and the nine together polled only 312 first preference votes from among the 324 Congress(I) and six Congress(S) rebels of the faction led by Raj Mangal Pandey who aligned with the ruling party. On the other hand, even Raj Narain managed to attract 10 votes more than the 14 of his Democratic Socialist Party and its stray allies.

The 16-vote dissent surprised the high command which had despatched Tourism and Civil Aviation Minister A.P. Sharma as well as Rae Bareli MP Arun Nehru and Mrs Gandhi's aide Makhanlal Fotedar to help Chief Minister V.P. Singh shepherd his flock. Singh spared no trouble, personally supervising the voting, food and transport arrangements of the MLAs.

Cross-voting seems to be something of a habit in Uttar Pradesh for not only did the Congress(I) suffer from it, the Lok Dal's successful candidates Ram Naresh Kuswaha and J.P. Goel together polled only 59 votes against the 65 pledged to them by their own party, the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Congress(S). In their eagerness to ensure Raj Narain's defeat, some opposition parties joined hands with the Congress(I), which goes to show that politics makes strange bedfellows indeed.

—PRABHU CHAWLA

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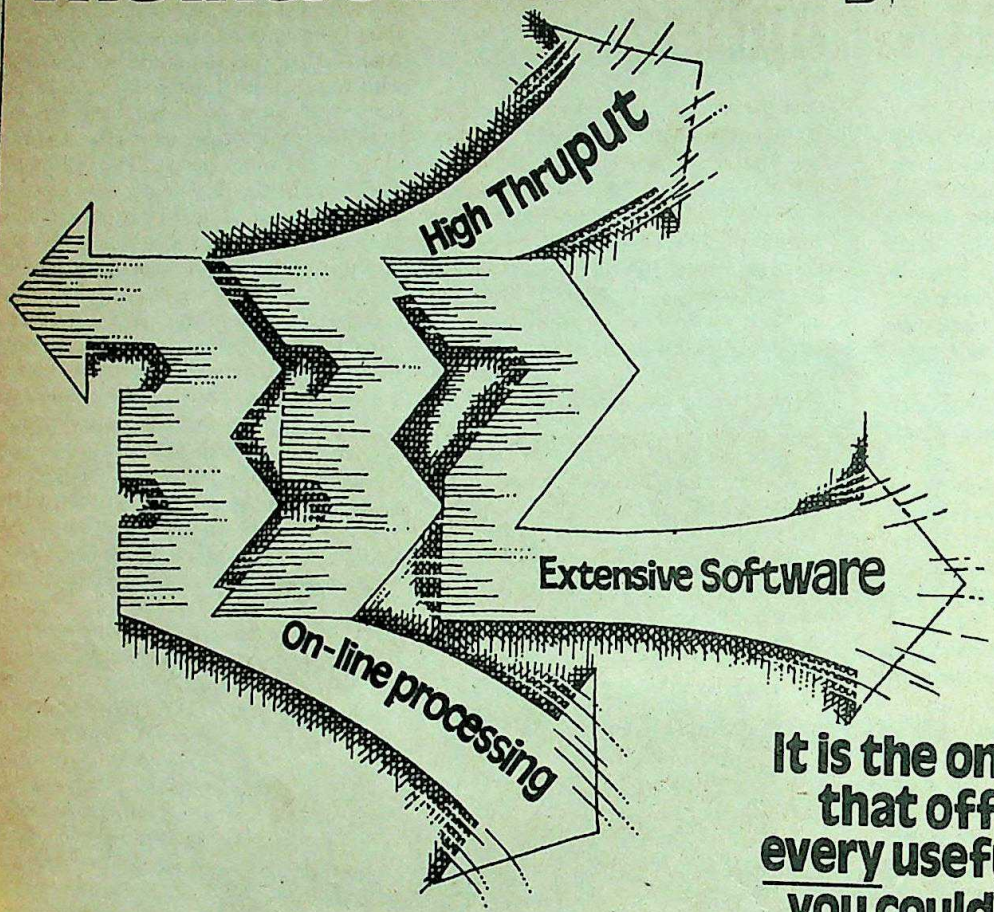

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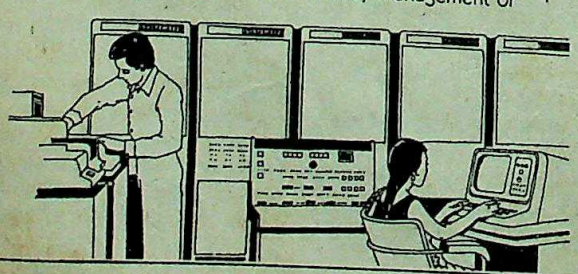

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COMMUNISTS

Convenient Coupling

IN THE mini-general election set for next month, the two communist parties, the Communist Party of India (CPI) and Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M), will stand together, "coupled and separable", for the first time since 1957. The two parties still nurse their differences. These differences will continue to be aired with a certain amount of polemical acid in the columns of *New Age* and *People's Democracy*. But communist unity has emerged from the recent congresses of the two parties as the principal political tactical line.

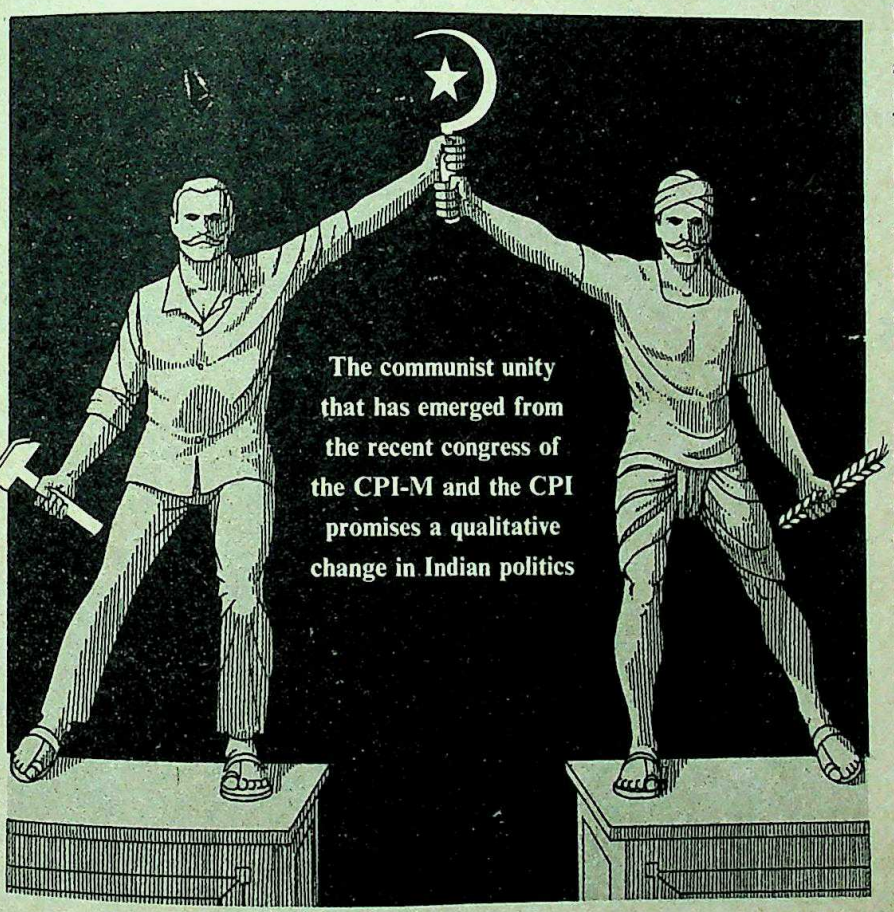
It promises a qualitative change in Indian politics. Spokesmen of both parties believe that, [illegible] they should be able to make a "big [illegible]" in six states, and [illegible] decisively in three. The elections this year and the next will plant the two communist parties [illegible] on the political [illegible] of the whole of [illegible]," asserted a CPI leader shortly after the party's 12th congress at Varanasi last fortnight.

CPI leaders do not [illegible] the congress as most [illegible] the press saw it. For [illegible], the significance of the congress lies in the [illegible] extinction" of the [illegible] line in the party; [illegible] unanimous support [illegible] the delegates to communist unity and the flexibility of the tactical political line of choosing [illegible] and friends in the [illegible] context of India's domestic politics.

Unity: Echoing Rajeswara Rao, who [illegible] elected at the 12th congress general-secretary of the CPI for the sixth time, a CPI member claimed that the party was now "more united" than ever since 1972. "Both the CPI and the CPI(M) communist unity is more important than the relatively minor [illegible] that still stand on the way to merger." [illegible] if he visualised reunion in the foreseeable future, the CPI leader said: "If we can work together five years, reunion will definitely be on the cards."

Sources in the CPI(M) said that they took a positive view of the CPI's 12th congress. In Marxist perceptions, the CPI has got rid of the "remnants of Dangeism", while its policy to fight both Congress(I) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is not fundamentally different from the Marxists' own tactical line adopted at the 11th congress of the CPI(M) at Vijayawada. CPI and CPI(M) sources explained in strikingly similar language: "It is impossible to adopt a rigid attitude on the question of electoral alliances or arrangements."

The Marxists use more piercing rhetoric to attack the authoritarianism of Indira Gandhi. The CPI assumes a sterner posture with regard to the BJP. But both parties recognise that in specific political contexts they may have to forge tactical linkages with one against the other. Both parties recognise the existence of potential allies in the Congress(I) once the ruling party begins to break up. The crucial condition is the strength and unity of the communists.



The communist unity that has emerged from the recent congress of the CPI-M and the CPI promises a qualitative change in Indian politics

Political Questions: At the Varanasi congress, the CPI leadership faced three principal political questions. Firstly, how should the party respond to the Soviet Union's evidently positive assessment of the "peace-loving" and "anti-imperialist" foreign policy of Indira Gandhi? Secondly, how strongly should the party rate unity with the CPI(M)? And thirdly, what should be its tactical line with regard to the bourgeois political parties? CPI sources deny that there was any pressure from the Soviet Union to move closer to the ruling party. "The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) takes a positive view of left unity in India. How can they want us to do something that would disrupt left unity?" CPI sources maintained.

Even if the CPSU did not press the CPI leaders to get closer to Congress(I), there is little doubt that it did advise the CPI not to "over-react" to Indira Gandhi's domestic policies lest she be driven to an alliance with the right wing parties. On this there is now a broad agreement between the two communist parties. The fact that Mrs Gandhi has allowed elections to be held in West Bengal with the Left Front Government in power suggests that she is not as hostile to the CPI(M) as her rhetorics sometime make her appear to be.

What is of greater significance, however, is a subtle change that has occurred in the CPSU-CPI relationship. It seems that while the CPI is willing to accept the CPSU's international line, it is no longer in a mood to permit the Soviet party to lay down its domestic political line. The CPSU also appears to have decided that an increase in communist strength is a necessary asset in the changing milieu of Indian politics.

Cautious Optimism: In both communist parties, people now speculate on what Mrs Gandhi would do if she were faced with menacing BJP electoral successes on the right and significant communist successes on the left. The current communist thinking is cautiously optimistic that she would tilt to the left rather than compromise with BJP. This is also the hope of the CPSU's India watchers.

At Varanasi, the CPI extended warm support to Indira Gandhi's anti-imperialist and peace-loving foreign policy, but resolved to fight her domestic policies. The dichotomy proved to be fatal for the united CPI in the 1950s, but may not prove to be so in the

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1980s. Like the BJP, the CPI-CPI(M) combination is also bracing itself for Indian politics *after* Indira Gandhi.

On the question of communist unity, the dividing line at the CPI congress was between the radicals and conservatives. Delegates from West Bengal, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Maharashtra were overwhelmingly in favour of giving top priority to unity. While no one opposed unity, a minority wanted the CPI to zealously guard its distinctive identity and not to be swallowed up by the CPI(M).

But the Marxists leaders too are willing to treat the CPI respectfully where its support base is stronger, as in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. CPI and CPI(M) sources claim that fighting together in 1982 and 1983 they will "spring a political surprise" in Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Tamil Nadu, and improve their positions in Assam, Punjab, Maharashtra and Rajasthan. They of course expect to inflict a "crushing defeat" on the Congress(I) in West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala. —BHABANI SEN GUPTA

ORISSA

Peeking Order

THE URGE to look into another's letters is often irresistible. In New Delhi, the authorities have been using a century-old act to steam open and read the mail of opposition politicians and prominent journalists (INDIA TODAY, August 16–31, 1981 and March 31, 1982). The states have also been playing the 'mail-watch' game. Orissa is a case in point—governments may come and go there, but the roll of target names is here to stay.

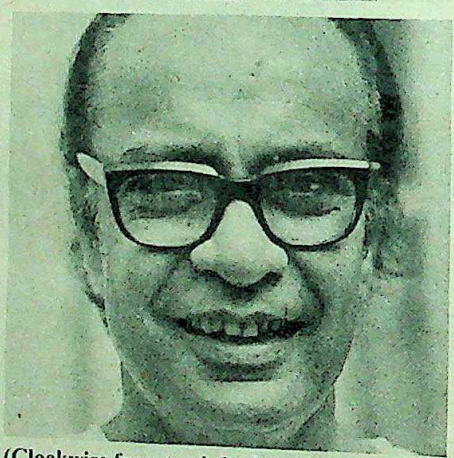
Nandini Satpathy, chief minister from 1974 to 1976 took the practice to great heights, expanding an already existing list of 110 people to 380. Her successor Nilamani Routray of the Janata Party cut the figure to 179, but even he—with his party's vaunted respect for individual rights—did not dare to break with tradition. And when Congress(I) Chief Minister J.B. Patnaik came to power, he cast the net wider, putting the mail of 350 people under surveillance.

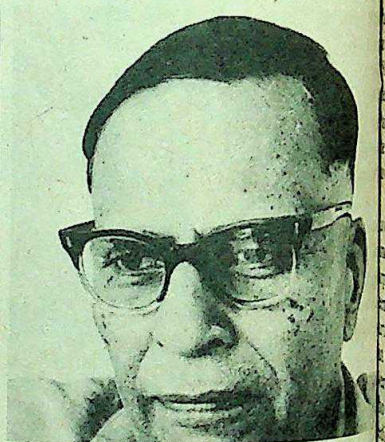
Satpathy's bug-bear was the Jayprakash Narayan-led movement during 1974–75. The state Home Department headed by B.R. Patel, a pliable Indian Administrative Service (IAS) bureaucrat, permitted the police to intercept the mail of over 100 active workers of the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M), the Naxalite movement, as well as office-bearers of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh and labour leaders opposed to the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), a Congress front organisation. Between December 1974 and June 1975, when the Emergency was proclaimed, the list swelled to 380, high-watermark for the state since Independence.

Targets: Both Patel and the then inspector-general of police Narsingh Swain agreed to the proposal of the intelligence agencies to bring members of the pro-JP Sangharsha Vahini and hostile journalists under the purview of the dreaded Indian Postal Act. The chief minister approved 25 orders to this effect, and the targets included former chief ministers Biju Patnaik and Dr Harekrushna Mahtab and their supporters, Ravi Dass, editor of the daily *Prajabani* and arch enemy of Satpathy's, Samarendra Kundu, later minister of state for foreign affairs during the Janata regime, Madan Ram Agarwal, industrialist, and A.N. Singhdeo, hotelier and son of R.N. Singhdeo, former chief minister. Even bureaucrats did not escape: Jatin Samal, a dynamic Indian Police Service official, had his personal letters intercepted.

The snooping was relaxed Routray took over in 1977. Patel placed as home secretary with Mahapatra and R.N. Mahapatra the new deputy inspector-general of (intelligence). Routray refused to sign terception orders put up before him 1977—but allowed the state Cri Investigation Department (CID) to inter the mail of two dozen politicians, incl that of Satpathy although she had joine Janata Party. Between September 197 December 1977 over 120 new names added on, including half a doze Satpathy's former cabinet colleagues Naxalite leaders operating in the tribal a

Prying Eyes: Bureaucrats, agai not escape. R.K. Rath, IAS officer, fo secretary to Satpathy and at present s secretary in the Union Agriculture Mi was in the list. Inevitably, opposition ticians were also there—J.B. Patnaik, Chandra Rath, MP and the then presid the Orissa Youth Congress(I), Di Patnaik, Congress(I) worker, and Mohanti, Communist Party of India leader and former member of the R Sabha. Interestingly, Routray's govern did not withdraw earlier orders conce





(Clockwise from top left) J.B. Patnaik, Satpathy, Mahtab and Biju Patnaik: the peek g

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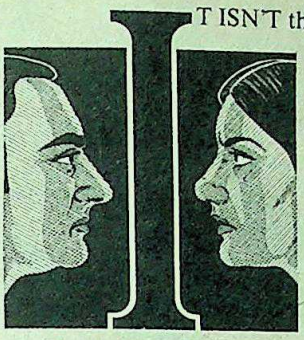
Snatch As Snatch Can



IT ISN'T the first time that a family quarrel has taken on the colour of factional politics. Nor is the last. And as there are two members of a family, each increasingly involved in politics, their kitchen clashes are bound to spill over into the public square.

The unseemly conflicts between Indira Gandhi and her aunt, Vijaylakshmi Pandit, dating back to the 1930s but still lingering in our day: of Sirimavo Bandaranaike and her son, Anura, in Sri Lanka recently; and now of Maneka Gandhi and her brother-in-law, Rajiv—all show how dangerous it is to let politics turn into a family parlour game.

No man is a hero to his valet, runs a familiar French saying. And the butler who knew too much and could not resist rushing to the press or blackmailing the lord or lady of the manor is not a fictional character: he exists—as even poor Nehru belatedly discovered, when his private secretary O.M. Mathai had to quit over a threat to spill the beans.

"The first round goes to Maneka," chortled the many sneaking admirers of the prime minister's daughter-in-law on the morning after the night of the sordid rumpus at 1 Safdarjung Road. The snatch-as-snatch-can struggle in which she engaged with her mother-in-law was, however, essentially about the custody of the infant Varun. Obviously, the grandmother in Mrs Gandhi got the better of the prime minister in her.

Maneka Gandhi has acted shrewdly or is well-advised. Flattered by the attention she has received in the press, she has been unable to resist holding court at her West Delhi office, giving "off-the-record" interviews to national editors and foreign correspondents who humbly queue up for a meeting with her. They hope, no doubt, that she might reveal something enabling them to get a scoop or break a big story, Watergate-style, which would help to embarrass and hopefully to bring down the prime minister.

But Maneka hasn't made up her mind yet. She has so far refused to divulge much. She feels she has not reached the point of no return in her relationship with her mother-in-law. Perhaps she also understands instinctively that, despite the prospect of the Opposition's support, there can be only one winner if she engaged in an all-out conflict with the prime minister. Hence, despite some damaging innuendoes, Maneka has soft-pedalled on the issue of the breach with the family.

The youthful family rebel's real fight is with Rajiv who, she feels, has usurped her late husband's place in the political sun—and, even more, with Rajiv's band of advisers who have kept her out of even so innocuous a position as the trusteeship of the Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Fund. But here, too, she dissembles. She knows that Arun Nehru's brazenness in doing so is prompted by the prime minister's own preferences and prejudices. Hence, Maneka Gandhi's protest is at one remove directed at the prime minister herself.

As a political leader Indira Gandhi has always had a problem—one that springs from her unique popularity in the country. She has been reluctant to let anyone share the national limelight with her, the special relationship she enjoys with the Indian masses, a rapport she did not so much inherit from her father as she has herself been able to foster through a series of bold political gambles.

No sooner a potential contender to her position begins to bask in this limelight—Yashwantrao Chavan, Devaraj Urs, Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna—than she compulsively wishes to demonstrate to them and to the country that they are nobodies without her. The only exception she is willing to make in the business of such sharing is in favour of her own progeny. Hence the oft-raised charge against her that she is not a 20th-century democrat because she wishes to hand down a dynasty to rule over India.

But the prime minister's critics, in full cry on this and other related issues, are barking up the wrong tree. Either their analysis of Indian politics is superficial or they misjudge the democratic temper of the people. Fortunately, in our system, neither Rajiv nor Maneka can hope to succeed Mrs Gandhi *after* her—unless, like any other contender, they manage through their own actions to cultivate charisma of their own, to build—in other words—a hope-inspiring relationship with the Indian people.

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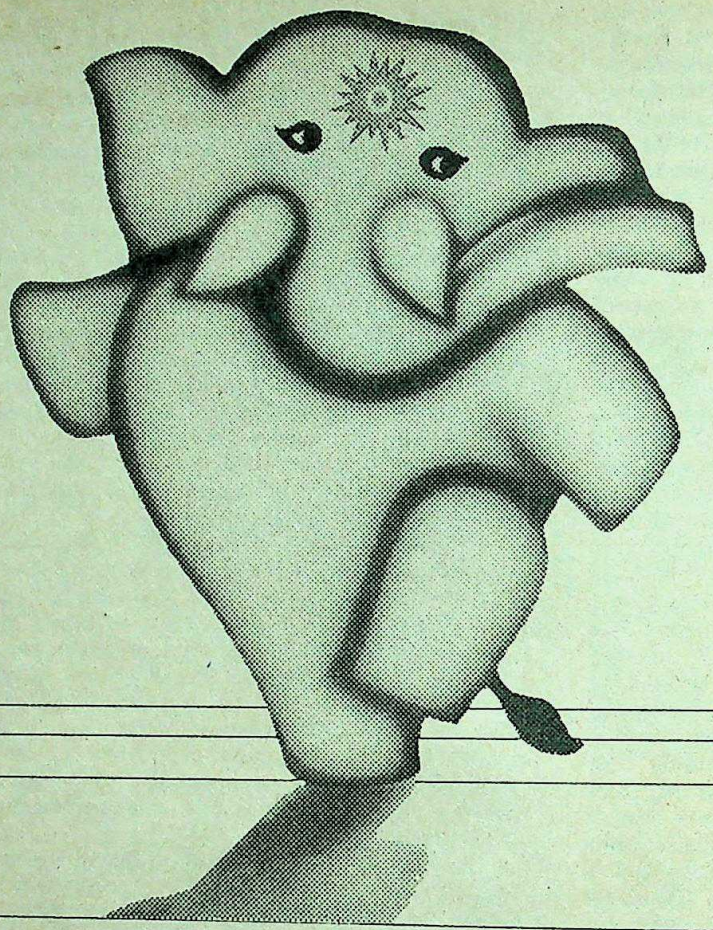

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NARCOTICS

The Test-Tube Terror

ABOUT 15 years ago the international hippie community discovered their soul-brothers among Varanasi's *bhang* and *charas*-using sadhus. Now with the coming of the hippies a new drug has been added to the holy city's psychotropic pharmacopoeia—heroin. It was widely believed that heroin was an illegally imported item until last month when in one week two laboratories refining heroin from raw opium were unearthed in the city, thanks to an informer's tip-off. They were the first such labs to be discovered in India.

The raid on the first heroin lab on March 19 by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) narcotics wing had virtually gone unnoticed. So had the second, five days later by the Varanasi city police. The two incidents were being viewed in isolation. Not so much as by design but more so because of the lack of cooperation. Neither of the two enforcement agencies knew what the other had discovered. Varanasi has long been known as a centre of drug trafficking (INDIA TODAY, May 1–15, 1981).

The CBI narcotics department analysis was probably correct when they said, "No organised peddling of drugs has come to our notice so far," but it was a growing possibility and there were factors that pointed towards it. Said Pratap Kumar Srivastava, deputy superintendent of police, Varanasi, "Since November we have seized small quantities of heroin and morphine and have apprehended 10 drug peddlers."

They would possibly have succeeded in apprehending many more had they known what to look for. Said a police official, "Our problem is that we are really not trained to identify drugs, even if we were confronted with the drugs it would be difficult to tell the difference between heroin and glucose. What is required is a crash course in drug detection."

First Seizure: The prelude to the discovery of the labs was arrest of the 'Foxi brothers' by the French drug enforcement agency. The arrest of Pascal Holay, 23, and Lionel Bourderioux, 24, two Frenchmen at Orly Airport in Paris on April 22, 1981

MEDIA

April Fool

AT THE height of his fame, Orson Welles created minor history by broadcasting a fictional but highly realistic account of Martians invading Earth, causing unprecedented panic. Former Maharashtra chief minister A.R. Antulay is no Martian, the *Indian Express* is not the world and Gangadhar, an unassuming spoof writer whose column appears under the *nom de plume* Trishanku is no Orson Welles. But in a Wellesian parody last fortnight the three elements combined to create considerable confusion and chaos in Bombay.

The ignition point was a front-page article by Trishanku carried in *The Daily*, R.K. Karanjia's paper published from Bombay. Headlined "Antulay Buys Express", the article gave a realistic account of a dramatic transaction in which Antulay had acquired the *Indian Express* from Ram Nath Goenka for an undisclosed sum. Within hours of hitting the stands, *The Daily* was sold out and copies were selling for Re 1 against the newsstand price of 60 paise. Like wildfire, the news spread across Bombay; in restaurants, offices, taxis and trains the only topic of the day was the *Daily* story and its connotations.

Leg-pull: Most people, however, failed to realise two things. One was the date on the paper: April 1, April Fool's Day. The second was that Gangadhar is a columnist who specialises in Art Buchwald-type spoofs, and though he currently works for the *Reader's Digest*, has been writing such stories regularly for *The Daily*. Nonetheless, throughout the day, the *Express* and *Daily* switchboards were jammed with callers demanding to know whether the story was true. Once they realised it was merely an April Fool joke, the anxiety turned to appreciative chuckles—but one man who failed to see the humour in the situation was Goenka.

The same evening, Karanjia received an irate letter from Goenka's solicitors demanding that the story be retracted and an apology published (see photostat). Says Karanjia: "The story was a hilarious bit of leg-pull and Antulay, the principal target, was the first to appreciate the joke and telephoned us his congratulations. My good colleague, Goenka, however, felt otherwise and sent us a thundering notice. We, however, responded in good spirit, for, after all, the notice too was dated April 1."

Gangadhar, 41, the innocent origin of he fracas, says he was surprised at the reaction. "Everybody was talking about it in the city and they really believed it was true even though the entire story was filled with bits of absurdity." However, said he, most people also missed the real irony of the episode—the fact that nobody doubted Antulay's capability to purchase an institution like the *Indian Express*.

—DILIP BOBB

Gangadhar (left) and the Express notice: much ado about nothing

CHIMANLAL C. SHAH
MANEKLAL D. SHAH
KANCHANLAL L. TALSANIA
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IMMEDIATE.

No. C/ 706/82 Date 1st April 1982.

To

M/s. Blitz Publications Pvt.Ltd.,
Proprietors of The Daily,
And
2. Mr. R. K. Karanjia,
Editor, Publisher & Printer of The Daily,
Patel House, 17-17 H,
Cawasji Patel Street, Fort,
Bombay-1.

Dear Sir,

We are writing this letter under instructions from our clients, The Indian Express Newspapers (Bombay) Pvt.Ltd. and its Chairman Shri Ramnath Goenka. Our clients are Printers & Publishers of the wellknown English Daily Indian Express in several editions which has a very wide circulation all over the country and enjoys high reputation. Our clients' attention is drawn to a story published by you in the issue of The Daily dated 1st April 1982 alleging that our clients have sold Indian Express to Mr. A.R. Antulay, former Chief Minister of Maharashtra, under the heading 'Antulay Buys Express' on the first page of the paper. The story is absolutely false, baseless and malicious. Our clients have received number of enquiries in connection with the story. It has gravely affected our clients' reputation and harmed our clients' business interests.

2. We are therefore instructed to call upon you to forthwith publish immediately on the first page of The Daily as prominently as the Article [illegible] story [illegible]

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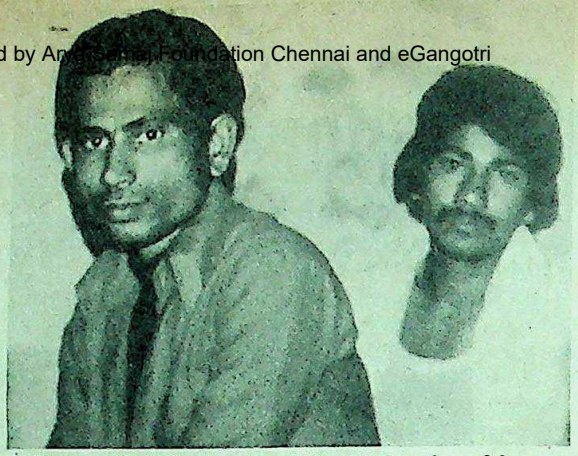
with 210 grams of heroin and their subsequent interrogation led them to reveal their Varanasi contact known as Foxi. Foxi turned out to be Bharuv Nath Chatterjee, 28, the chemist and his younger brother Ram Babu, 19, who had sold the heroin. CBI investigations led them to the small alleys of Varanasi. They gathered that the Chatterjee brothers were about to make a contact.

On the afternoon of March 19, they had shadowed the two, who were to pass 250 grams of heroin to a foreign buyer as sample for a larger shipment. The foreign contact did not materialise and the CBI officials moved in. The CBI officials were surprised when Bharuv Nath confessed during interrogation, "I have been selling it for two years and I make heroin on order only from a lab at my house." The accidental confession led to the recovery of a mini lab. According to CBI officials, the two brothers also confessed to having obtained the heroin they had in their possession from another lab, which they declined to identify. Local police believe that the opium base is being obtained from Gazipur, 80 kilometres away, where opium is cultivated legally.

Heroin, once it is refined from morphine, depending upon the purity (according to one source it is 92 per cent pure) could easily be cut five or six times to 2 to 3 per cent concentration per dose, allowing a retail price on the streets in North America close to 10 times the local purchase price (Rs 100 per gram), reaching as high as Rs 1.25 lakh per kilo.



Bharuv Nath (in front) and Ram Babu: foxy felons

Second Seizure: Four days after the CBI discovered their heroin lab by accident Sub-Inspector D.P. Shukla, station officer of Sigra police post was tipped off that drugs were being hoarded at Nau Pura railway colony and moved in. Little did he know that he would end up with a full-fledged lab.

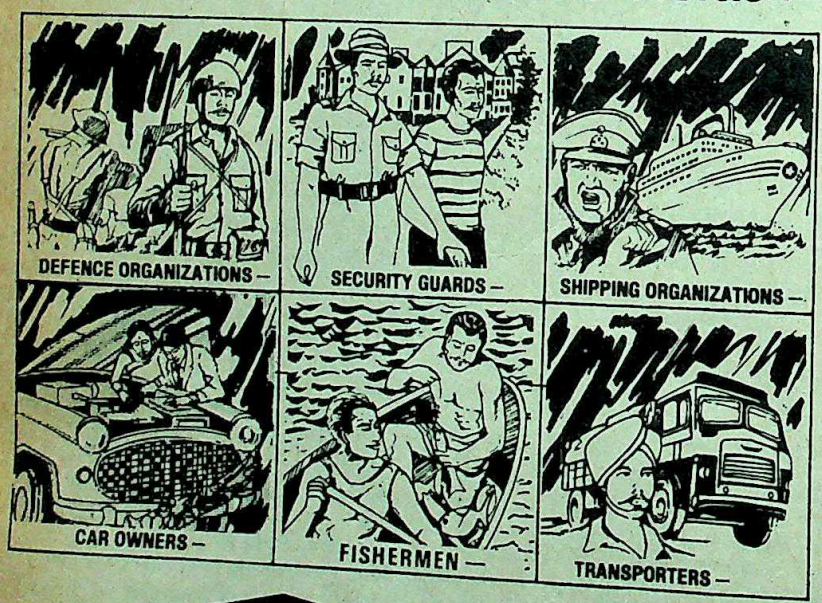
In the early hours of March 24 he caught Pradeep Kumar, 30, and his wife Iris, 27, unawares. The search led to the recovery of 39 grams of heroin and the seizure of a substantial amount of equipment. Said Shukla, "We found a heater along with 10 bottles of acetic anhydrite, the crucial ingredient needed in converting morphine into heroin, a box of filters, ammonia solution, sodium carbonate and tartaric acid." The two subsequently produced at the sessions judge's court in Varanasi were let off on bail.

Said Shukla, "Both of them are now absconding. Iris according to our information has gone underground in Bombay." The Varanasi police did not realise how significant the haul was.

The discovery of the clandestine laboratories manufacturing heroin is not taken seriously enough by the enforcement agencies. The 1981 report of the International Narcotics Control Board had specified that during the course of 1981 India had emerged as a transit point in illicit trafficking. It is only a matter of time for India to become a source country. The discovery of the laboratories indicates that this is hideously imminent.

—ASOKA RAINA in Varanasi

FIELD MARSHAL in various fields..



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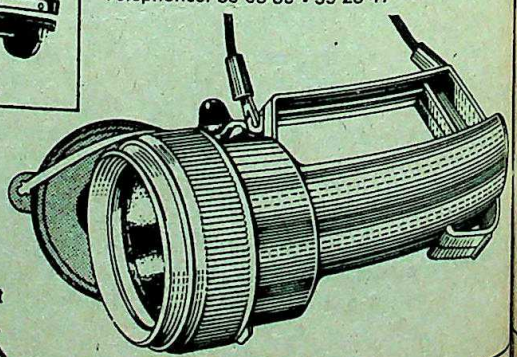

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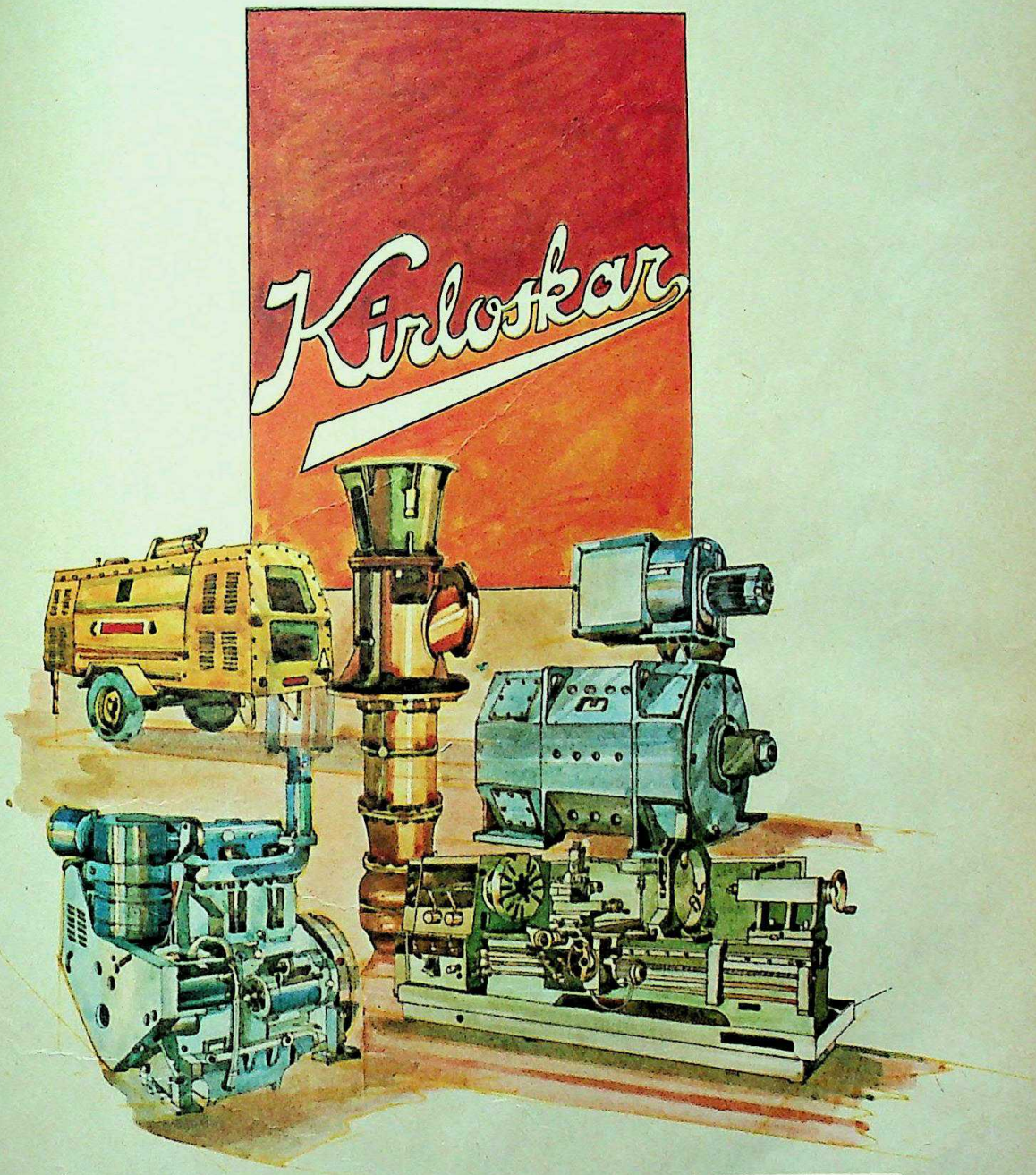

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when nothing else matter
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tremble of a smile ....
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KERALA

'Om' Sweet 'Om'

COCHIN had never seen the likes of it. Even the political parties which hold rallies at the drop of a hat have never pulled in as large a crowd as the Vishal Hindu Sammelan last fortnight for which an estimated 5 lakh people converged on the city in an amazing display of Hindu solidarity.

The rally was also remarkable for the amount of planning which went into it. For days before, saffron *bhagwa jhandas*, the standard of orthodox Hinduism, had come up all over the city. And the political graffiti which decorate most of Cochin's walls, was painted over with *Om* signs.

Careful Planning: It was also probably the most elaborately staged rally held in the city. At the north end of Cochin, the people who had come from Malabar formed a long column which was called 'Ganga'. At the southern end, another long column, formed by the hordes from Travancore, snaked its way towards the centre of the town. The place where they met was symbolically described by the organisers as the Triveni Sangam, where the large crowd was addressed by the President of the Virat Hindu Sammelan, Karan Singh and Swami Chinmayananda.

The greatest achievement of the Rashtriya Swyamsewak Sangh (RSS) which was the prime mover of the rally, however, was that it was able to cut across caste barriers. It was the first time that the two dominant communities of Kerala, the Ezhavas and the Nairs, joined together, even if only temporarily, forgetting their traditional differences.

Long before the rally was held, it was clear that it was likely to have serious repercussions on the stormy caste-ridden politics of Kerala. The Marxists whose vote bank comes from the backward Ezhava community were particularly keen that the sammelan should not succeed. Over the last few months the Marxists have seen an erosion of their support to the RSS, especially in Malabar. *Deshabhimani*, the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) newspaper wrote acid editorials denouncing the meeting. So much so, that the organisers of the conference have protested to the Press Council of India.

Minor Problems: The success of the sammelan came despite several minor problems it encountered. It nearly got embroiled in local scandals. Just one week earlier, the president of the sammelan, M.K.K. Nayar, was arrested. Nayar, a retired IAS officer who was the controversial former chairman of Fertilisers and Chemicals Travancore Ltd was arrested in connection with the marks list scandal which has rocked Kerala. Nayar joined a host of other well-known personalities in the state who have been implicated in the scandal. He was arrested for allegedly getting his son a forged marks list for the pre-degree examination held in 1970. Nayar claims that a conspiracy has been hatched by certain policemen, who infiltrated into the force during Marxist rule, to disgrace him by arresting him on false charges. Said Nayar: "I will fight it out in the courts, but the Hindu renaissance can never be controlled."

Several demands were made at the sammelan. Karan Singh groused about the Government's decision to drop Maha Shivaratri and Ramnavami from the list of holidays this year. Singh claimed that the sammelan was a new thrust against untouchability and atheism. Swami Chinmayananda who also addressed the meeting called upon Hindus to be proud of their religion. He added that the repercussions of Meenakshipuram would be felt in a few years. Other speakers demanded that independent devaswom boards should be appointed to manage temples in Kerala.

But the demands were perhaps only incidental. The main thing was the psychological effect created by the sammelan. And if this effect lingers long enough it could have a marked effect on the coming Assembly elections in the state.

—SREEDHAR PILLAI in Cochin

A view of the Cochin procession: psychological solidarity

HARYANA

Dropping Bricks

GOING by the number of foundation stones that today litter the Haryana countryside, it's Chief Minister, Bhajan Lal, is one of the most promising politicians in India. If he were half as good at delivering as he is at promising Haryana would become the first five-star state in the nation.

In the first three months of this year alone Bhajan Lal and his ministers have laid 60 foundation stones, promised twice as many projects worth crores of rupees and vowed to upgrade schools by the dozen.

On January 22 Bhajan Lal promised a grant of Rs 50,000 for a mini-stadium at Sports Minister Jagan Nath's village, Isharwal. The day after that he granted a lakh of rupees for a municipal committee building and half a lakh for a school.

On February 11, in the chief minister's Adampur constituency he laid eight foundation stones for canal brick-lining, minor irrigation works and a health centre. Next day he announced six health centres for Baddopal, Mohammadpur Rohi (his ancestral village), Jhalanian, Bordhana, Nahla and Dhansu. And the day after that, on the

Bhajan Lal at a ceremony: stony ground

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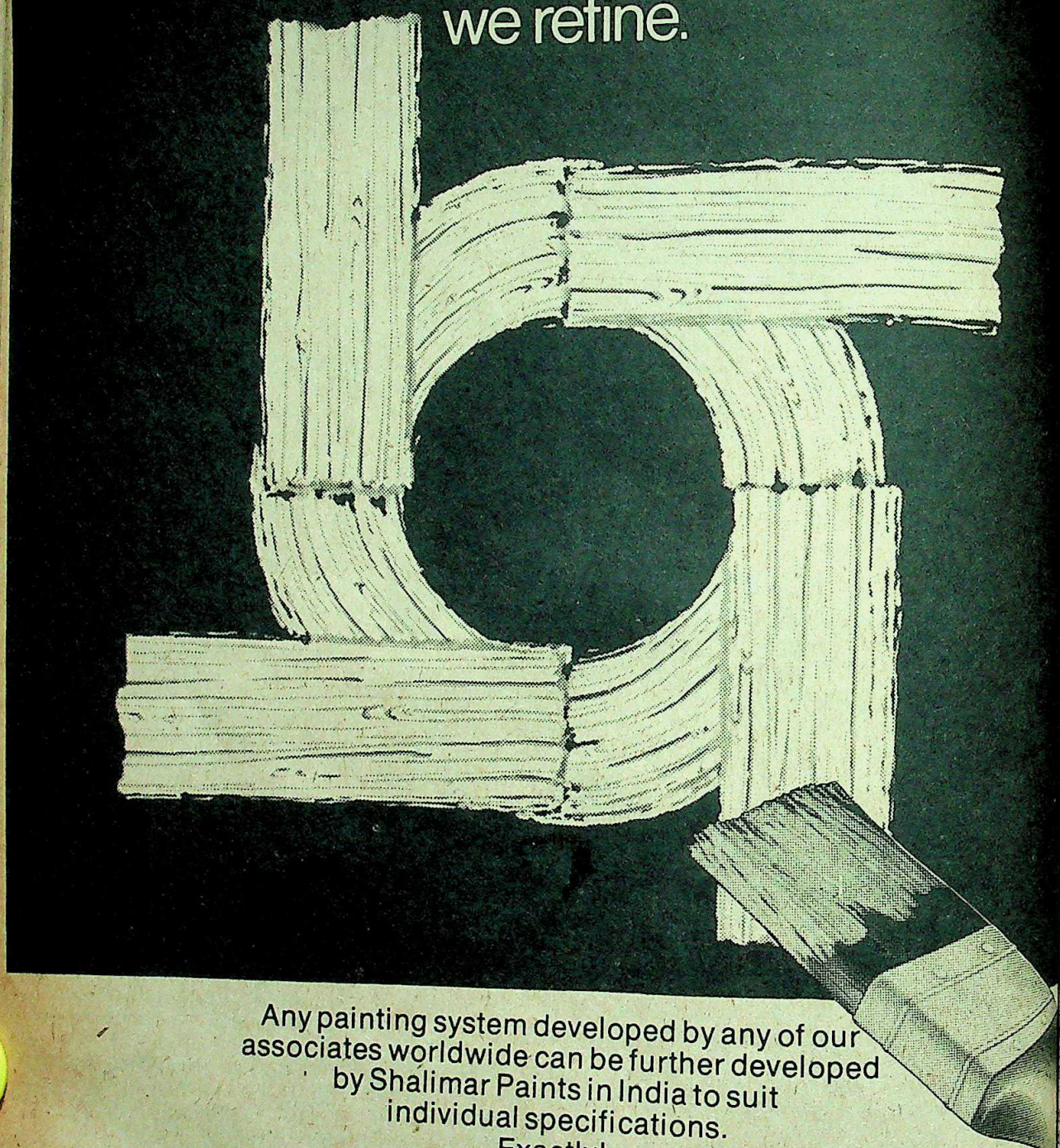
What the Japanese define... we refine.



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of the visit of Lok Dal leader Charan
and Jagjivan Ram, he visited 13 vil-
in Hissar district and promised grants
ging from Rs 5,000 to Rs 25,000 for the
truction of *chaupals*, street paving and
mary schools. He had no time to lay the
dation stones.

More Projects: But less than a week
he was out with his trowel again, laying
dation stones for a Rs 1.5 crore grain
ket and a Rs 50,000 court complex at
thri, a water supply scheme near
tak, a school and a bridge. In between
very jobs he launched a Harijan *chaupal*
promised to upgrade two schools.

It would appear that stone-laying has
come Bhajan Lal's principal occupation.
Hissar district has been virtually sprayed with
dation stones: a water scheme and tehsil
plex at Dabwali, a civil hospital at
Rania, waterworks at Khera, a 20-bed
pital, a grain market and a girls, high
ool for Nathusari Chopta, another girls,
h school for Charwala and piped drinking
er for all the 41 arid-zone villages of
ra Assembly constituency and Harijan
rmshalas in two dozen villages.

Where does the state exchequer get the
ney for all this? It doesn't. Most of the
jects are still just foundation stones—
ept in his own home town of Adam-
which has acquired a 30-bed, well-
pped hospital, a degree college, an ad-
nistrative complex, a housing colony, bus
nd, a posh, marbled rest house and an
ctricity sub-station. It is a treat to see the
ampur new market where Bhajan Lal and
business partner, Pokhar Mal run a
mission agent's shop. Known as the
-chief minister, Pokhar Mal occasion-
y stands in for his partner at foundation-
ne-laying ceremonies. He laid one recently
a *kisan* rest house.

Near Adampur, Fatehabad boasts of a
-bed hospital, a new tehsil complex and a
s stand. Critics point out that Fatehabad
populated mainly by Bishnois, the chief
ister's caste-fellows, but Bhajan Lal stou-
denies that the village has been favoured
r that reason.

With Assembly elections approaching
e chief minister is working overtime at
tributing verbal largesse. Whether he is
ting a dusty village or a bustling town,
Bhajan Lal refuses nothing. He says "so be
to whatever people ask of him and goes
to throw in a school or a health centre on
e side. In fact his "jo mange manzoor"
ything you say) approach has earned him
e nickname Manzoori Lal. But as a resident
Mehtam village near Rohtak noted,
what remains of the promises is the dust
hich his speeding caravan of cars leaves
hind."

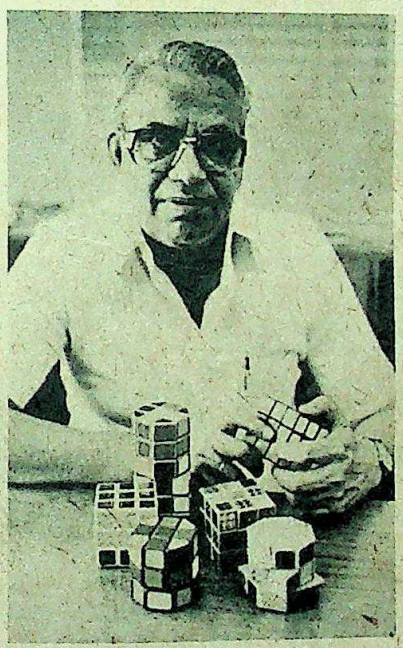
—GOBIND THUKRAL

BEHAVIOUR

Cube Root

AT BOMBAY's St Mary's School, two boys were sent to the principal for concentrating studiously on a muti-faceted, vibrantly coloured plastic cube during class. They emerged, three whole periods later from the office—after teaching the principal the way to solve the puzzle.

Cube fever is not confined to schoolboys. At offices, restaurants, on trains and even on the kitty party circuit, the maddening Rubik's cube, which has 43, 252, 003, 274, 489, 856, 000 solutions, is the most fiddled-with object since prayer beads. Internationally the sales of the cube have reached a staggering 50 million and now Indian manufacturers, after a belated awakening, are all set to jump on



M.O. Shah: more puzzles in store

the bandwagon. By last fortnight there were a total of 10 manufacturers in Bombay churning out various versions of the puzzle for a seemingly insatiable public.

Cube Rush: One domestic manufacturer estimated that in the first three months of this year more than 1 lakh cubes were bought by people in Bombay. Said M.O. Shah, sole distributor and partner in Toitoy, a company that has sold over 20,000 cubes since it entered the market six months ago: "The cube is a record breaker. No game or puzzle has ever picked up in Bombay the way this one did. And demand is still growing at a tremendous rate."

From congested Mohammad Ali Road to sophisticated residential Malabar Hill, the cube has become Bombay's social leveller—there is one to fit every kind of pocket, taste and expertise. From a Rs 20 mini-cube attached to a key-chain to one with a sandalwood finish priced at Rs 55, the range reflects the demand. Sunil Shah, proprietor of the Eros Book Stall in downtown Bombay, stated that in addition to over 1,000 cubes he has also sold 500 books on the various solutions. Jalauddin Mia, a hawker in the busy Flora Fountain area, who stocks the cheaper ones sells up to 15 a day, as do the numerous other hawkers along the line.

For manufacturers the cube has proved to be a jackpot. Toitoy, which operates out of a 300 sq ft factory and a tiny office at Masjid Bunder has now hit the bigtime in toy manufacture. It has already upped its production from 200 cubes a day to 300 and has started distributing in Calcutta, Madras, New Delhi and Gujarat. It also plans cube-solving competitions with a prize of Rs 5,000 at metropolitan centres.

Ideal Conditions: Other brands are doing as well. To make matters simpler no royalties are paid to either Hungarian inventor Enro Rubik or to the manufacturers in Hungary who hold the patent rights. Cost price of the cube is usually half of what it is sold at and marketing costs are non-existent. And Bombay which has a large die-making set-up for the injection moulding industry is the ideal place of manufacture.

For people who have mastered the cube there is more puzzlement on the way. More sophisticated models, including numbered, spherical and pyramid-shaped cubes that work on the same principle are slowly making their way to shops. Amratlal Dayabhai Sinrojia, proprietor of Toitoy, is all set to launch the Octa-cube, an octagonal puzzle devised by Rubik as a follow-up on the cube. Still on the drawing board is a ring puzzle based on the Rubik principle.

The last word on the reason for the popularity of the cube was probably provided by A. H. Tobaccowalla, managing director of Voltas, who sent the cube as a New Year present on behalf of his company with the message: "We (Indians) have more experience and are more adept than other nations at confounding people, in avoiding solutions, and we are better at remaining calm after getting ourselves into an inextricable mess".

—CHANDER UDAY SINGH

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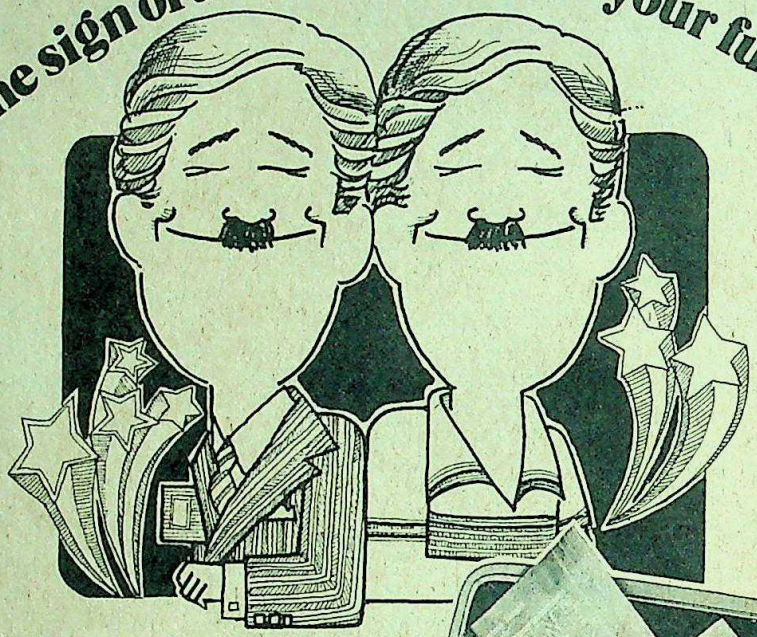
At the sign of a business trip in your future...



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GUJARAT

The Killer Disease

GUJARAT was once considered a law-abiding state and its citizens were famed for their peacefulness. Not any more. The crime graph of the state has lurched upwards as the canker of politi- violence has spread through the state.

The latest to die a violent death is Manda, 58, the vice-president of the unit of the Janata Party. Manda died in village in Junagadh district when police opened fire to separate two warring factions at the meeting of a sugar cooperative.

Inexplicable Facts: But the story is not that simple and there is considerable doubt about who actually shot Manda. To start with all the four people killed and 14 injured were Manda's supporters. One of the dead was his nephew Lakha Kisa, 19. Manda's eldest brother Miyatbhai, 65, was also seriously injured. But there are other more inexplicable facts besides this. X-rays show that several of the injured were hit by crude country-made bullets. Two doctors attending on the injured, M.R. Dodia and P.M. Mehta say that they have never seen such bullets before. Also, they say that most of the injured have tiny burns around the area where the bullets entered, indicating that they were fired from close range. And besides this, the police claim that they only fired 14 shots at the crowd. The X-rays however show 28 injuries.

The police themselves say that they heard four shots ring out, seconds before they started shooting. Deputy Superintendent of Police Pratap Jani says that they opened fire when they heard the shots. Till then, he says, they had tried to control the violence with lathi-charges and tear gas. He says that the meeting turned violent when Manda got up saying that he wanted to make a point. The chairman of the meeting however stopped him saying that it was not on the agenda and he should have given in questions or comments three days in advance as per the rules. In the fracas that followed, Manda's supporters numbering over a thousand went on the rampage.

Manda's death has come as a severe blow to the Janata Party in Gujarat. Besides being the vice-president of the state unit of the party, he was also the vice-president of the Junagadh district panchayat. But more than that, he was the binding force behind the party in the district, and it was largely due to him that the party was in power at both the district and taluka levels in the district.

Fears: Manda apparently had feared that he was marked out for assassination, because in December 1981 he had claimed at a party meeting that his opponents were planning to kill him and that he was, "moving around with death lurking around". Now his partymen say that his fears have been proved only too true. Says Bramkumar Bhatt, secretary of the state unit of the Janata Party: "Manda's is not the first political murder in Gujarat. We cannot allow this to continue." Other Janata leaders express the fear that the violence is designed to prevent good candidates from joining the party.

Congress(I) leaders deny any hand in Manda's shooting. Says Hasmukh Patel, secretary of the state Congress(I): "The Talala incident was just a fight between two groups and had nothing to do with politics. But political parties are trying to take advantage of it".

But whatever the truth behind the charges and counter-charges, there is no doubt that there is a clear pattern of violence against opposition party members. In the last two years there have been several attacks on them:

► In May 1980, Vasanji Thakrar, 45, a sitting Janata MLA and a Janata candidate in the last Assembly elections from Porbander was shot dead.

► In January 1981, Laljibhai Visnagara, 51, a victorious Janata candidate in the taluka panchayat elections from Lathi in Amreli district was stabbed to death in the counting place as soon as the election results were declared.

► In February 1981, Babulal Parel, 60, a Janata Party leader and president of the Jamnagar taluka panchayat was shot. He survived the attack.

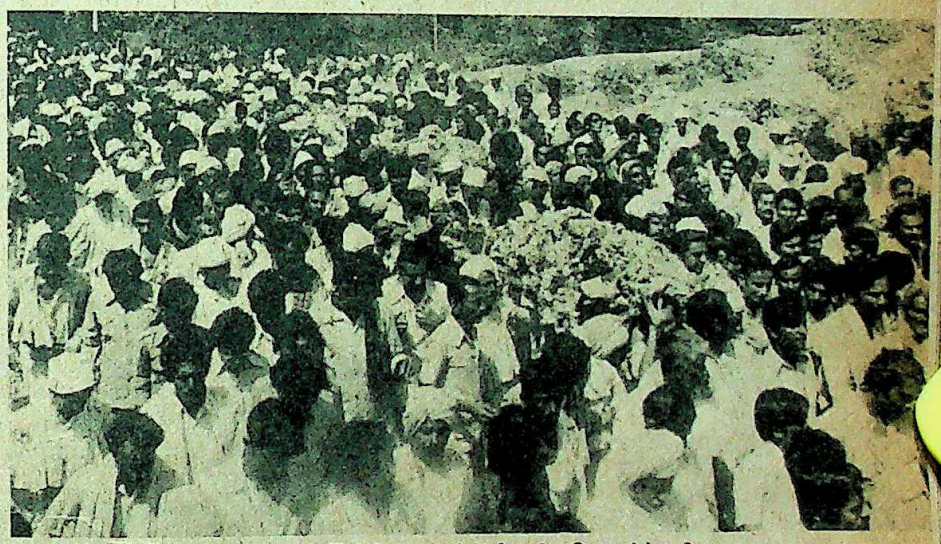
► In March 1982, Anup Makwana, 24, another Janata Party leader from Dhoraji in Rajkot district was shot dead.

► In March 1982, an attempt was made on the life of Rajnikant Parikh, the president of the Janata-dominated Amreli municipality.

But Manda's death will not be forgotten soon. Manda was extremely popular in his district. His son recalls bitterly that he was not allowed to pick up his father's body.

The Ahir community to which Manda belonged is also reported to be angered over the killing. And unless something is done to establish that these were not political killings, more blood is likely to flow.

—RAMESH MENON



Manda's corpse and (right) the funeral procession in Talala: gunning for the Opposition ?

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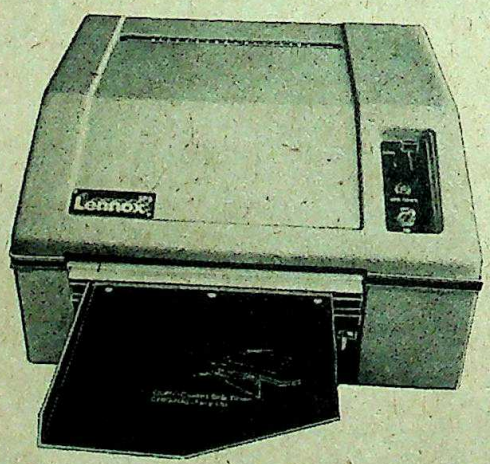

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Protesting rickshaw pullers: crowded out in Calcutta

WEST BENGAL

Rocky Road

TRAFFIC in chaotic Calcutta began flowing a little easier last fortnight when the Government cracked down on the ubiquitous hand-pulled rickshaw. These have now been banned along Chittaranjan Avenue, the city's principal north-south artery, and on other roads. In the rest of the city only those rickshaws registered with the Calcutta Corporation will be allowed to run. The number of such vehicles has plunged from about 35,000 to 6,000 and protests have been voiced by the pullers, opposition politicians and ruling Left Front members.

The owners of unlicensed rickshaws, together with some pullers, have formed the All Bengal Rickshaw Welfare Association, which has been holding largely ineffective demonstrations and hunger-strikes. The pullers claim to hold licences issued by the various municipalities around Calcutta and think these should be good enough for the metropolis. However, no hand-pulled rickshaw can be found in the outlying municipal areas where the cycle rickshaw holds sway. The association contends that there are not more than 12,000 unlicensed rickshaws: as it also claims that a hundred thousand pullers have been affected, this puts the number of affected rickshaws at around 50,000 assuming two pullers to each. The owners are yet to get over their shock at seeing a source of easy income drying up overnight. Ranjit Ghosh, who owns 12 rickshaws and is one of the key figures in the association, said: "My monthly income was around Rs 800." He said he had invested around Rs 12,000 a couple of years ago and has got back his money. "But what about my future?" he moans.

Others hit by the order include head constables attached to various police stations—in the Salt Lake area, a jamadar reportedly owns a dozen rickshaws. Said a government official: "These people may not occupy senior posts in the force, but so strong is their lobby that they had always managed to prevent any action being taken against rickshaws." This time, however, Urban Development Minister Prasanta Sur's writ prevailed.

Opposition: The rickshaw owners were supported by Kalimuddim Shams, deputy speaker of the Assembly, who took up their cause with the state Government. A Forward Bloc member, Shams is reputedly a major fund raiser for the party which is a major constituent of the ruling front. He urged the state Government, on his official letter-head, not to harass owners of registered rickshaws. Since these have not been touched so far, it is felt that real intention was to bring pressure to stop the drive. Last year, he had been successful in stalling a drive against pavement hawkers.

Public reaction to the order has been mixed. While breathing space on Calcutta streets is welcome, people are worried about the monsoon months, when the nimble rickshaw is often the only means of conveyance along waterlogged streets. Also, it is the cheapest transport: two kilometers can be covered for less than a rupee.

Most of the pullers were poverty-stricken villagers from Bihar, and have already started returning to their villages. The Government has plans to introduce auto-rickshaws, and some of the pullers may shift to these. The fact remains that slow-moving vehicles have no place in a city where only 2 per cent of the surface area is available for carriageways.

—SUMANTA SEN

ANDHRA PRADESH

Star Turn

MORE than 30 years of racing around film sets pursued by buxom leading ladies have not wearied him. Now, on the verge of his 60th birthday, when other men contemplate retirement, Nandamuri Taraki Rama Rao, the star of more than 300 movies has entered the rough and tumble of politics to "uphold the self-respect of the Telugu people".

Rao freely admits that he was inspired to enter politics by the example of fellow film star-turned-politician M.G. Ramachandran (MGR), in neighbouring Tamil Nadu. He says of MGR: "He has achieved his objective. He has been able to successfully project himself as the hero standing on the side of suffering people."

Promises: This is obviously the image that Rao would like to project of himself to the world. Like all new political parties, his new party Telugu Desam (Telugu Land) promises a new start in politics. At his first press conference Rao made all the standard promises such as a corruption-free government apart from a few additional ones like saying that he would unite the Telugu speaking people.

So far, however, the auguries are not good. The first few members who have hitched their wagons to Rao's star are defectors from the Congress(I). And they are defectors with none too spectacular track records. One of them, N. Bhaskara Rao, has had the distinction of being dropped from the cabinets of both Chenna Reddy and T. Anjiah. The others who have shown an interest in joining the party are politicians of different hues who are attracted by the hope of riding to power in company with the film star.

But whatever the quality of the rank

Rao, on screen and off: following MGR's example

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and file, the new party has already thrown a scare into the mighty Congress(I). An indication of the panic in ruling party circles came even before Rao officially announced his intention of joining politics. His old college-mate Chief Minister Bhavanam Venkataram invited Rao to ride with him to Raj Bhavan for the swearing in.

Capitalising: But if there were any doubts in Congress(I) circles that Rao would be able to capitalise on the factionalism in the ruling party they were rudely dispelled at the time of the Rajya Sabha elections. In an unprecedented display of cross-loyalties, large numbers of Congress(I) legislators voted against their own party candidates allowing the opposition party nominee, P. Babul Reddy, to romp home and secure the highest number of votes in the election.

Apart from the factionalism in its own ranks, there is also an ominous caste configuration which threatens to work against the Congress(I). It looks as if the Kamma community and the Harijans are joining hands to seize power from the Reddys. Rao himself belongs to the economically powerful Kammas. But despite its financial clout, the community has never been able to exercise political power. They are now said to be rallying round to back his cause. And two of the legislators who have joined the party are Harijans.

Rao has promised that if he decides to go into politics full-time, he will give up films. Already he has started cutting back on his film schedules. But financially this should be no wrench for him. For years he has been the highest paid star of the Telugu screen. He is said to be paid around Rs 14 lakh to Rs 15 lakh for each movie, and over the years it is said that he has stashed away crores in bank. He also owns three theatres and a studio, one wing of which he has made headquarters of his party. He is said to notoriously tight-fisted.

In real life the star is no great speak At his first public address he delivered halting speech which sounded more movie dialogue. Rao however claims this will be no disadvantage. He says have always had encouragement from people. Now also they expect someth from me. They believe in my honesty. T believe in me. So naturally they are exten all help and giving encouragement Whether this is correct or not, there is doubt that Rao who is famous for mythological roles in Telugu films is going try his best to play God in Andhra Pra

—AMARNATH K. MEN

TRIBALS

Catching One

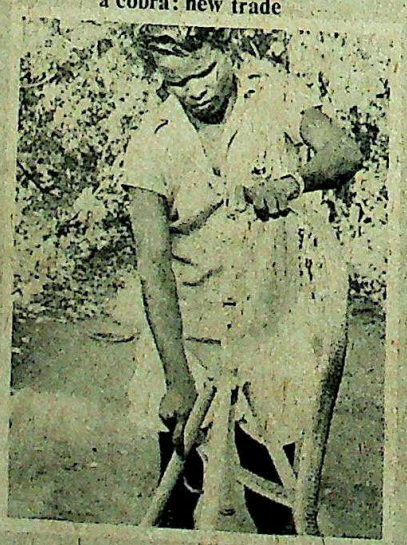
FOR CENTURIES the Irulas, a tribe in Chingleput district of Tamil Nadu, hunted in forests and became highly skilled snake and rodent catchers. But with forests and wildlife dwindling rapidly, the Irulas find their traditional means of livelihood imperilled. Refusing to be lured by the big city lights the Irulas (pop: one lakh) continue to comb the forests living on termites and herbs. Some of them have been induced by unscrupulous snakeskin traders to use their traditional skills to catch snakes, skin and then sell them, illegally, for a song. Their activities escalated especially after the snakeskin market went underground when the Central Government in 1976 banned the killing of certain varieties of snakes permitting only licence holders to do so.

After clearance from the Tamil Nadu Government, the National Snake Farm in Madras, last fortnight, formed the Irula Snake Catchers' Cooperative, the first of its kind, to put the Irulas back on the right path by tapping their traditional skills. Initially the cooperative will serve the needs of the snake venom industry by catching common snakes and supplying them to the Haffkine Institute in Bombay and the Central Research Institute in Kasuli. As, according to one survey, almost 10,000 people die of snake bites in the country every year, antivenom is in high demand.

Venom costs something like Rs 250 a gram for common snakes like the cobra and goes up to Rs 5,000 for varieties that are difficult to catch. According to Romulus Whitaker, director of the Snake Park and president of the cooperative, from next month 25 Irula families will form the nucleus of a small-scale venom production industry that will not only cater to the country's growing demand but also try to make inroads into the export market. They will go into the forests and catch the snakes and bring them to the Snake Park where laboratory facilities for extracting venom are available.

Venom Extraction: The Snake Park has already trained the Irulas in the art of extraction. To extract venom the snake is made to bite a piece of rubberised cloth covering a glass. The venom collected is purified, crystallised and sold by the gram in bottles. As few snakes live longer than three to six months, monthly extraction and continuous catching could deplete the snake population.

An Irula extracting venom from a cobra: new trade



The snakes will be released after four extractions have been made and on release a code number with the date will be stitched onto the scales so that even if they are caught again they will not be exploited. Whitaker expects to sell the venom at much cheaper rates than the existing market price because the cost of production will be low. If the going is good each member could earn a minimum of Rs 600 a month.

Apart from catching snakes, the Irulas could also catch rodents and work to control termites especially for industries. While these occupations are relatively harmless what has been worrying the Tamil Nadu Government is that the Snake Catchers' Cooperative, especially when more are formed, may be misused by the underground snakeskin industry, as it will give the Irulas a licence to catch snakes. If this happens it could drastically reduce the snake population. The Government gave its clearance hesitantly only after the Snake Park agreed to directly involve itself.

While Whitaker admits that the cooperative could be misused, he is confident that with careful handling, the Irulas could be made to put their traditional skills to good use without harming the snake population. Said he: "What they would be catching is an insignificant number of snakes that will not threaten the ecological balance at all. The job is tailor-made for the Irulas."

—RAJ CHENGAPPA IN MADRAS

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RA PRADESH/NFC

angerous igns

SAFETY and security measures at the Nuclear Fuel Complex (NFC) in Hyderabad seem to have hit a new low with two accidents last month. Whether it could have been avoided is debat-

t the manner in which two children ffer extensive burns in a strange fire on ch 6 and how the NFC ushered in the New Year (March 26) with a bang at rconium sponge plant reveals basic lessons are still being learnt at the ter—the kingpin of the country's ato- nergy programme.

In a negligent act a woman and children were killed and at least 12 injured in the blaze of March 24 last. Flammable zirconium scrap caught fire the drums containing the material were ded from a lorry by the roadside innocent passers-by (INDIA TODAY, 16-30, 1981). This year the NFC is on ground and is not totally responsible the death of Velu, 9, and Palaniamma, what remains a mysterious fire at its mbustible waste dump. Paradoxi- the two children and their mother went there to collect fire wood. mi recalls: "There was a loud noise flames leapt high. The next moment girl ran and the boy was thrown back both had been burnt."

The girl died that night and the boy next ing at the Gandhi Hospital. Lakshmi, eyewitness is at a loss to explain how matter ignited. As illiterate migrant kers from the Dharamapuri district mil Nadu, Lakshmi and her husband are so ignorant that they refused to the ex-gratia of Rs 500 for the loss of child offered by the Government pre- ing it to be a bribe to buy their silence. So the Hyderabad-East Sub-divisional ate M.B. Ramswamy began the en- on March 24 he had to explain re- ry that questions being asked were to ascertain facts and not an indictment. ingly the NFC with all its scientific ds for disposal of wastes is also unable ain the explosion. Argues a senior NFC al: "The fire is a mystery even to us, the area has not been used as a dump the past two years." Nevertheless, the of magnesium chloride found in the were fresh; two-year-old waste would leached and been carried away by the Combustible zirconium filings have

M. Ranjit Rao

Ramaswamy (in dark glasses) with parents of the victims at NFC's waste dump: threat to safety

also been found there by the police who have promptly registered a case of death due to negligence against the NFC. Already five NFC officers are facing similar charges in the March 1981 case.

Investigating: Another telling indicator is a blackened patch on the rocky scrubland that is used as the dump. The flammable material, zirconium or anything else, would have had to have been present in significant quantity to leave that tell-tale sign. In their anxiety to disown responsibility for the fire NFC officials argue that if zirconium had been present as in last year's case, "The burns would have been intensive and of the third degree in which the flesh is virtually cooked." Post-mortem reports show Velu and Palaniamma died of shock following first and second degree burns. Now, it is for the police and the investigators of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) to establish the cause of the fire.

The poor response of the NFC staff to the incident is obvious. Syed Ghulam Rasool, an employee of a cycle rickshaw shop, who took the children to the Gandhi Hospital says when he telephoned the NFC from the Hospital on March 6 evening, the person who answered did not believe him. It was only the next morning and, as Rasool says, "perhaps after reading the newspapers", that the NFC began to evince interest. Apparently the NFC security needs tip-offs from outsiders to know what is happening on the 500-acre complex. The incident happened at about 4 p.m. in the peripheral 200 acres that lie beyond the tightly guarded 300-acre "Prohibited" area. Vigil in the peripheral area is poor and the security staff is not sufficiently strong to man the entire complex.

Faulty Furnace: The Telugu New Year explosion in the zirconium sponge plant was due to the lid blowing off one of the four reduction furnaces in which zirconium chloride is treated with magnesium metal to get reactor grade zirconium sponge and magnesium chloride as the by-product. These furnaces, commissioned in 1971, used to be filled from the bottom till 1976 when they were redesigned to enable top loading so as to increase productivity and reduce maintenance time. Each reduction process lasts about 40 hours and although 2,400 processes have been completed, using that furnace the pressure fluctuations are surprising, says a plant source at the zirconium sponge plant. The accident occurred following swift pressure changes which tore the lid off, blasting it right through the asbestos roof.

Now a high level safety review committee is investigating how the furnace failed and the fire deaths occurred and they will recommend steps to be taken to improve safety measures at the NFC. Meanwhile, the peripheral 200-acre open area is being fenced and security men are to patrol its perimeter round the clock. Following the 1981 incident the NFC has double-fenced its waste disposal facilities and is to strengthen it with a two-kilometre wall costing Rs 12 lakh. But once again the obvious preventive—that safety and health measures in the DAE units be enforced by an independent agency—is being conveniently ignored.

—AMARNATH K. MENON

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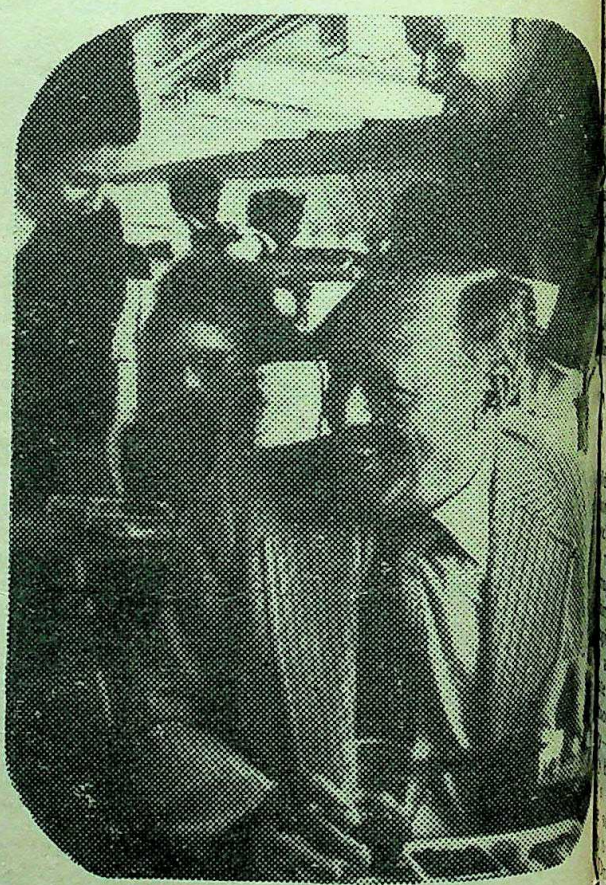

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allying The Faithful

DURING the past year, as the Khalistan issue has focussed national attention on the tortuous twists and turns of Sikh politics, one man has been consistently found in the eye of the storm—Sant Jar- Singh Bhindranwale. Outspoken and the slightly-built 35-year-old Sikh provokes intense reactions ranging adulation to loathing and has been everything from a communal seces- to an establishment stooge.

Declared a conspirator in the Lala Jagat murder case last September, his arrest the violence that followed it brought him the full glare of the media spotlight. The could not establish a case against him the time of his release in October, after -Akali agreement, his stock with the masses had soared.

Since then he has been constantly on the addressing two, sometimes three meet- day, mostly in gurudwaras, in Punjab, and Chandigarh. His meetings are by throngs of the faithful—and . Accompanied by busloads of his followers, the Sant does indeed appear (general) spreading a message of . What kind of man is Bhindran- What does he preach? And, more , what is his impact on those who him? To find out, INDIA TODAY *Corres- GOBIND THUKRAL spent, last month the Sant. His report:*

OR some he is a maverick in quest of martyrdom, others see him as a fa- tic fugitive. He is a thorn in the flesh -time Akali Dal politicians whose of power are threatened by his lastic zeal. Urban Hindus regard him bble-rousing villain, a rough and pulous bully. The Sikh masses listen in awe and respect—he is their . His public speeches veer between arguments and fiery challenges. In he is calm, self-effacing and—when become too direct or politically -quiet. There can be no doubt that he has become a major factor in the ever-shifting power equation, and, significantly, one whose influence is grow.

Dressed in a traditional knee-length (shirt) and a nine-yard Akali blue (turban), he looks like a Nihang in contrast to his rifle-toting bo- , the only weapon he carries is a arrow. Last month, he spoke in villages in Ludhiana, Ropar and Patiala districts, Moga, Chandigarh and Kurukshetra. He rarely quotes Sikh scripture but speaks bluntly in the rustic Punjabi of his native Malwa (the region south of the Sutlej). His peasant audiences, who have not heard anyone challenge authority so openly, lap up every word and respond to his thundering phrases with the Sikh war-cry, "*bole so nihal—sat sri akal*" (whoever says this will be fulfilled—Truth alone is immortal).

Not Guilty: Anyone planning to write a biography of the Sant would do well to consult the Central Intelligence Department (CID) which has assiduously taped his every public utterance. Although the officers have listened keenly for possibly seditious remarks, Bhindranwale has so far disappointed them. Concludes Punjab Director-General of Police Birbal Nath, "We examined these tapes in detail and have come to the conclusion that his threats and challenges do not invite any penal action."

Bhindranwale: voice of protest

BHAWAN SINGH

Chief Minister Darbara Singh professes unconcern: "I am not daunted by his threats nor are my police. So why should we take notice of all that the Sant is saying?" But he says in the next breath, "The moment we find that the law has been violated we shall act," adding bravely, "We know how to act, we are no cowards." However, it is also a fact that cases registered under the arms act against members of the Sant's *jatha* (following) have not been taken up by the police.

Bhindranwale's views are best conveyed in his own words:

On discrimination against the Sikhs: "There are separate laws for the Sikhs and the Hindus. If a Lala (Jagat Narain) is killed there are warrants within six days and I am arrested. If 18 young Sikhs are killed, their mothers and sisters insulted, their houses burnt and crops destroyed and their religious books burnt, no case is registered. The Government does not move for months." "If the Pandey brothers in Uttar Pradesh hijack a plane for a woman (Mrs Gandhi) they are rewarded with political positions. If the Sikhs hijack a plane to Lahore and that too for a cause, they are dubbed traitors. Why two laws for the same crime?"

On Resistance: "A Sikh carries his head on his palm, he is the embodiment of sacrifice. We have faced the Government during the Emergency by demonstrating 37 times and we will tear the Government to pieces if it comes near us. I accept the challenge of the Darbara Singh Government as the Sikhs accepted the challenge of the tyrannical regime of the Mughals, during the British Raj and after the so-called Independence. We know how to protect our religion."

On the Government: "The Government is afraid of religious people like me because men who occupy the seat of power have always been scared of the god-fearing religious man. Babar was afraid of Guru Nanak, Jehangir was afraid of Guru Hargobind and Aurangzeb of Guru Gobind Singh. The power-drunk rulers should know that nemesis will sooner or later overtake them."

On Extremism: "We are no extremists or communalists. Give us one instance when we insulted or hit anyone. But the Government terms us extremists. We are extremists if we protest when our Gurus are painted as lovers of wine and women by the Lala's newspapers. I preach that all Sikhs must observe their tenets and be the Guru's warriors. Let all Hindus wear their sacred thread and put tilak on their foreheads, we shall honour them. I stand for Hindu-Sikh unity. Let the Hindus at least once declare that they stand for Sikh-Hindu unity. Let the prime minister, whose forefathers our Guru Teg Bahadur saved by sacrificing his life, declare that she is for unity."

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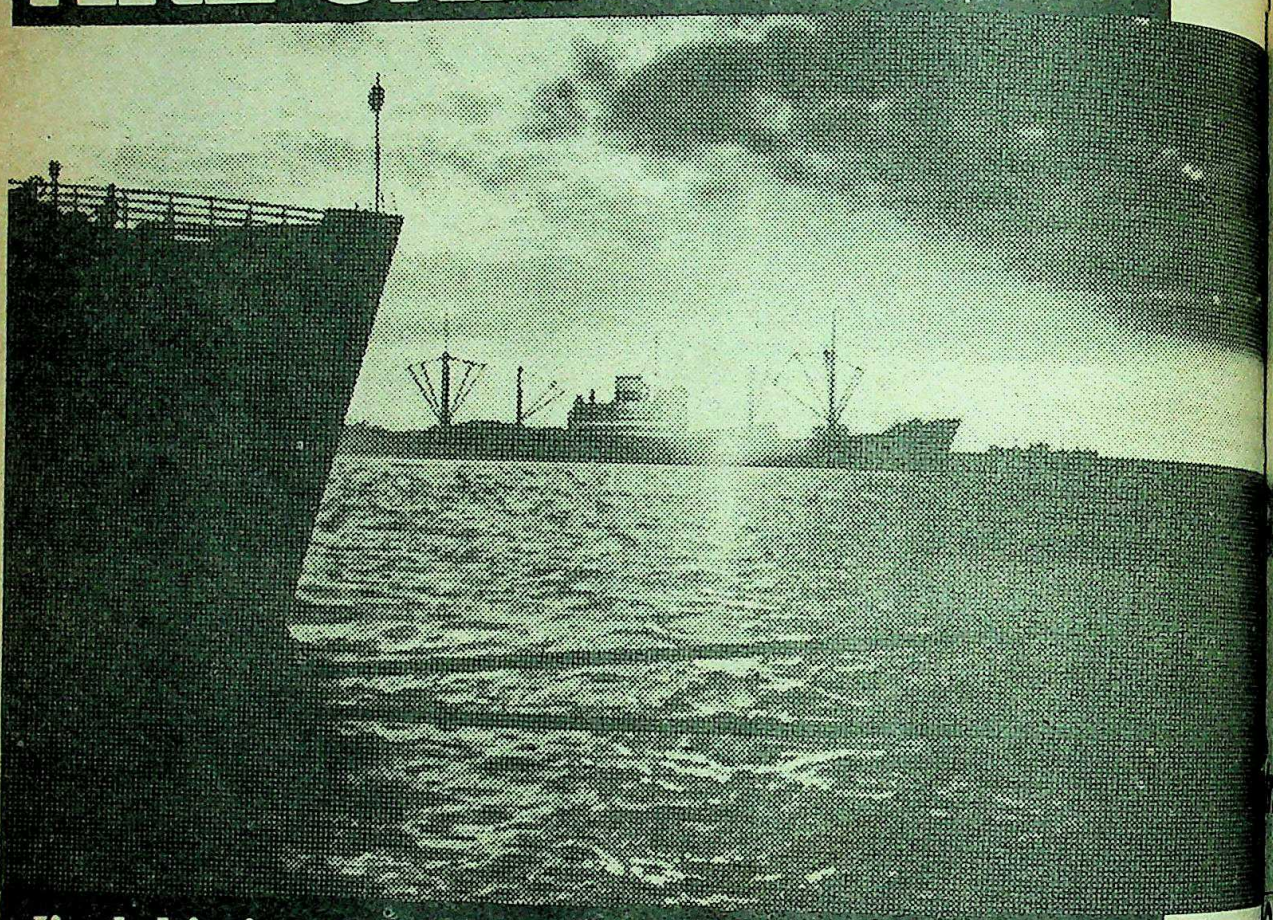
WHEN SEAS ARE SAILED



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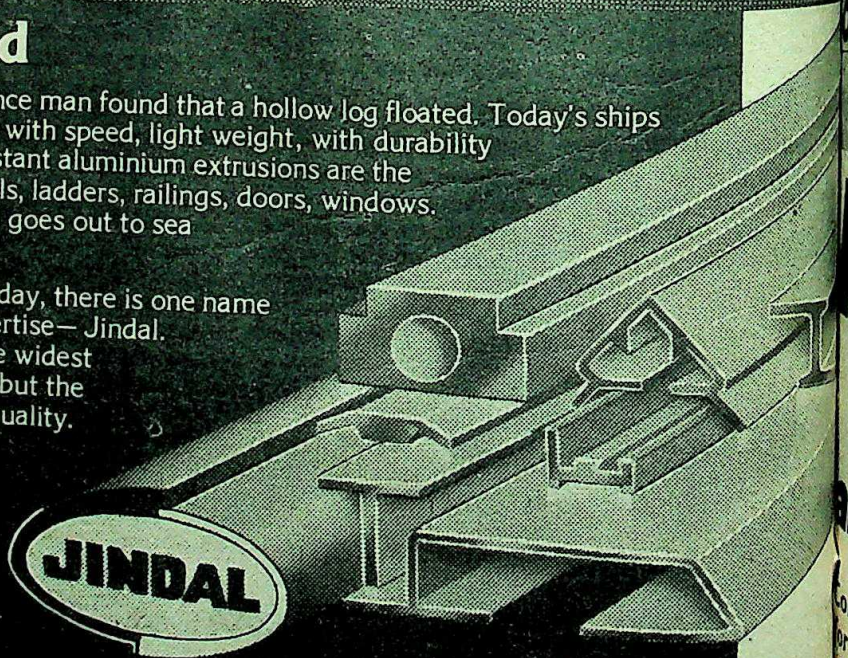

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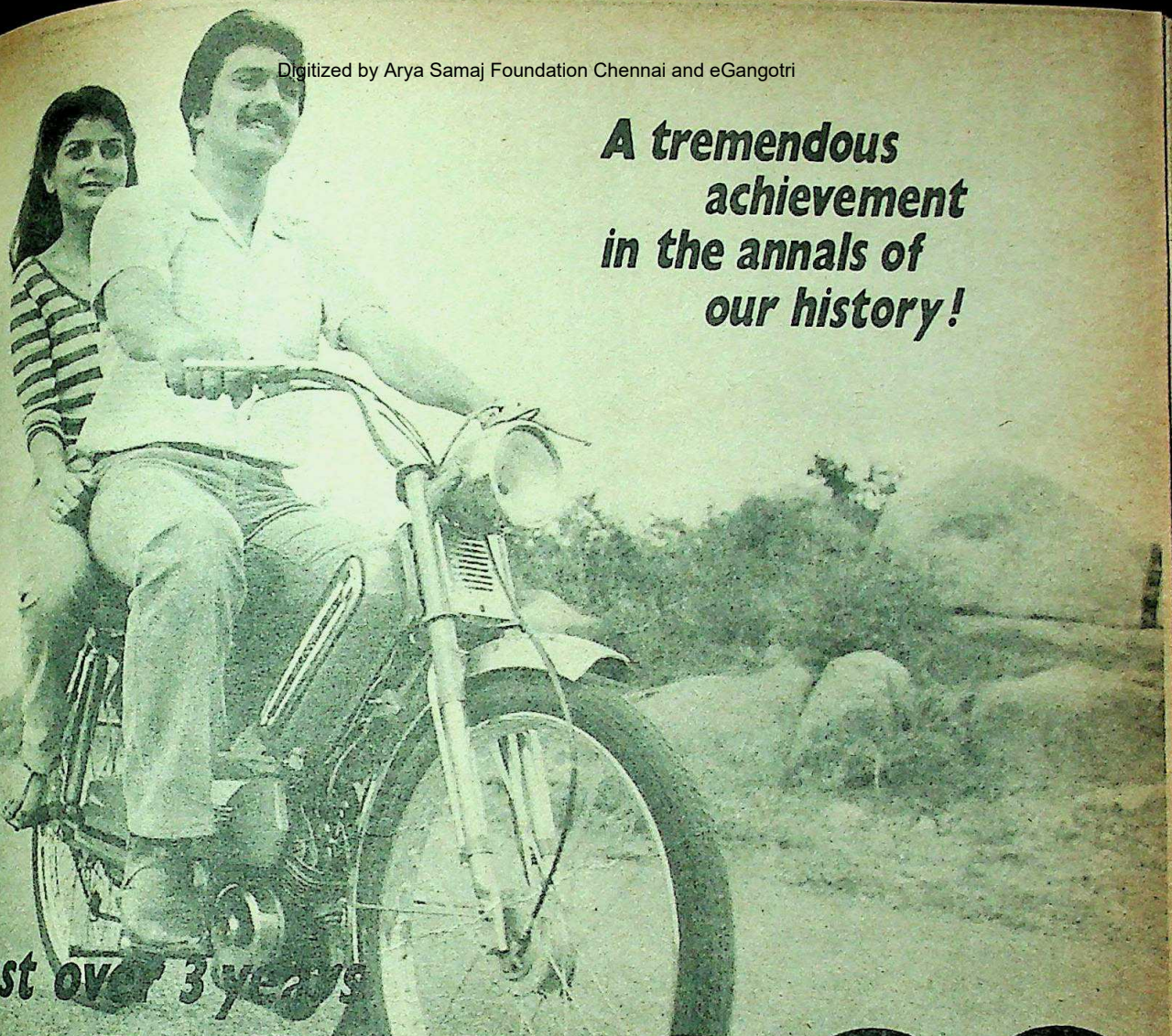

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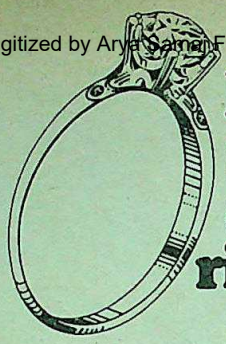

Indian muslin and the ring trick

The white man only seemed to twirl his moustache as he watched each 'saree' length of summery cotton pass through an ornate gold ring.

Then all of a sudden, he said 'My word! But that ring's just big enough to go round my finger'.

He met with a betel-stained grin.

'I'll take all the cloth you have' he said 'and, mind you, I'll be back for more.'

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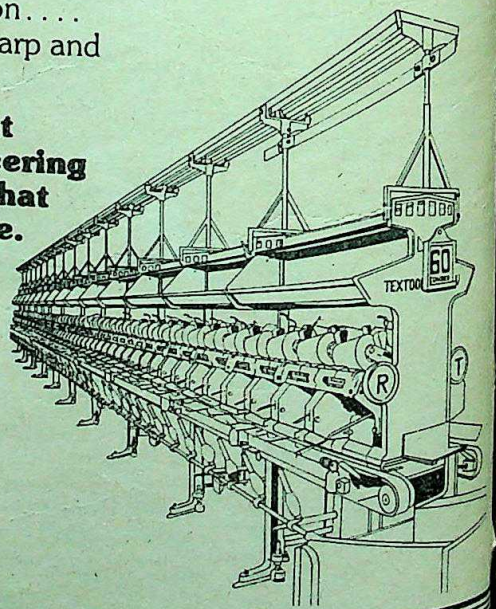

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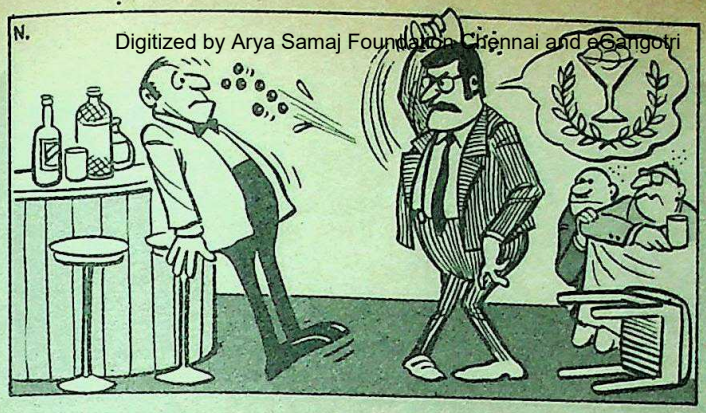


The gentleman leaning ...dily on the bar in a dis... little restaurant near ...chgate, Bombay, had ob... downed one too many. ...e asked, wasn't the air-...ioning working? Minions ...ered, switches were clic... ...n and the cold, bracing air ...Arctic invaded the room. ...a gin-and-lime, said the ...swaying da... ...sly and squinting sha... ...the bartender. In no time ...a cool drink was created. stirred with extra care, and a couple of cherries completed the work. With a flourish, the bartender handed the glass over to the customer.

However, the customer did not appear to like the drink very much. Specifically, he objected to the cherries. Asking the bartender not very politely if he (bartender) thought he (swaying gentleman) was a schoolkid, he flung the cherries at him and raised a chant for "Olives, olives, olives!" The bar had no olives in stock, he was told. A glass bit the dust in answer. When it seemed that a gunfight was brewing, another drinker came up to the gentleman, offered to drive down to his apartment and return with a bottle of olives. Fifteen minutes later the olives came, and a happy and even more unstable gentleman left after leaving a 100 rupee tip.

A TREAT

What do people drink tea ... Earthen pots, cracked glas... ...plastic cups, chinaware, sil...ware, goblets, the horn of a ...noceros? A member of the ...achal Pradesh Cabinet li... ...his sweet, hot and served in ...ming silver. It happened ...the minister called recently ...a very senior army officer. ...re he was given tea in a ...tea-set. Quite fascinated by the scintillating collection, the minister decided that he had to have one too.

A few days later, official circles were shocked: the minister was refusing to drink tea, and had spurned the humble china tea-set provided by the state Government. To stop him from dying of thirst, a public sector undertaking purchased a costly three-piece silver tea-set of the latest design and presented it to the minister. Whoops of joy resounded through the corridors, followed by the exhilarating sound of someone depleting the country's tea reserves. Even as the minister licked his lips and set out to address a meeting on the virtues of socialism, word had gone around that someone would like it very much if silver cutlery were added to that glittering tea-set.

EEDY STENOS

For humble citizens who ...ve that Parliament is a so... ...forum where the problems ...the country find solution th... ...gh considered debate, un... ...ered question No 1093 in the ...ya Sabha, answered a few ...eks ago, will come as a bit of ...rprise. Ramanand Yadav ...d Amarjit Kaur asked the ...ister of home affairs to state ...the world record for English ...thand; (b) highest speed in ...ish shorthand so far; (c) what incentives are being provided for attaining high speed in Hindi shorthand; (d) whether Government has received any proposal in which Government has been urged to honour this art; and (e) what are the details.

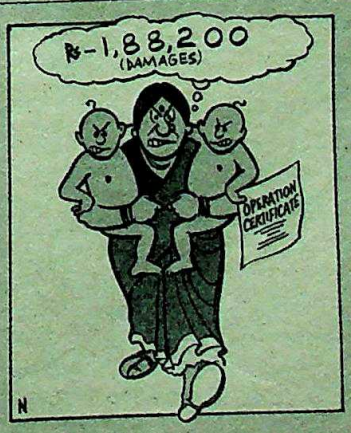
As the minister for home affairs had more important matters to attend to, the minister of state had to get up and reply. To the first two questions, the answer was "No information on the subject is available." This is incorrect; if the honourable minister had looked up Guinness, he would have found that many superbeings have passed 250 words per minute for English shorthand. The minister also stated that various incentives existed for Hindi shorthand specialists to encourage a speed of 80 to 100 words per minute. Anything higher was not officially encouraged. As for (d) and (e), Government was still undecided if shorthand was an art or a trade.

ABY BOOM

Deenamma lives in Peru... ...la, Trivandrum, Kerala and ...the mother of two boys aged ... and 10, and twins aged 2. ...ecause of the twins, she has ...d a suit claiming damages of ...1,88,200.

A few years ago Deena... ...decided that two was ...mpany but three a crowd ...went to the local health ...tre and had an operation. ...was assured by the doctors that everything would be all right, but a few years later the twins were born to her.

Deenamma got good and mad. She went to war against the Government and the hospital authorities and claimed compensation for negligence in the exercise of the duties of the hospital staff concerned. The breakdown of her grievance is: food and other expenses for the children—Rs 4,200, the cost of agony and severe anxiety because of the unwanted delivery—Rs 20,000, children's education until five years—Rs 18,000, educational expenses from five to 10 years—Rs 24,000, then up to 20 years—Rs 72,000, wedding expenses—Rs 50,000, court fee—Rs 18,800.



The hospital authorities, rather taken aback, argued that no compensation was due and really set Deenamma's teeth on edge by offering to perform the operation again.

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The Communication Chasm

INDIA is quite the most diverse country in the world. To weld this ethnic and socio-cultural mosaic into a single nation obviously requires a common framework of communication. This was never constructed. Unfortunately, language policy in a country with 15 scheduled languages, each with its own script, has been limited to "official language", which is what babus write on files, leaving India a conglomerate of linguistic aliens.

The Lok Sabha has just voted the annual grant of the Department of Official Language whose reports tell a dismal story of ineffective people seeking ineffectual ends. 'Official language' policy—a pitiable package of trivia—has tended to pit Hindi against English and Hindi and English against all other scheduled languages. The resultant confrontation has clouded issues and perpetuated linguistic illiteracy.

Official language policy has not been conceived as promoting all the scheduled (and other) languages of India, enabling them to grow and overcome the handicap of 200 years of colonial rule. No Indian language has been made attractive or easy to learn and no bridges have been built between the various languages.

There are no keyboards in several scheduled Indian languages. Hindustan Teleprinters, a public sector monopoly, has only produced Devanagri and, latterly, Tamil and Arabic teleprinters. The Devanagri keyboard is poorly designed and places an excessive burden on the right hand. The *Navbharat Times* and the *Maharashtra Times*, the country's largest Hindi and Marathi dailies respectively, prefer to transliterate Hindi and Marathi texts and use Roman teleprinters for all editorial and business messages between Delhi and Bombay. Telegraph offices in Hyderabad, Gauhati or Trivandrum will not accept cables for transmission in Telugu, Gujarati, Assamese or Malayalam. The Posts and Telegraphs Department can only send messages in Roman or Devanagri.

No Translations: Until the late 1960s, Parliament did not have any facility for simultaneous interpretation from English to Hindi and vice versa. For two decades many MPs could never address the House or even follow the proceedings because of the language barrier. Simultaneous interpretation facilities in Parliament are even now limited to Hindi-English. Kamaraj remained linguistically disenfranchised throughout his parliamentary career. Outside Parliament House, there is no auditorium or conference room anywhere where simultaneous interpretation facilities from Hindi to English let alone into other Indian languages are permanently or ever available.

The skills and systems have simply not been developed. Conferences and seminars are calculatedly limited to persons speaking the same language. Communication is barred horizontally and, even more tragically, vertically. Elites cannot speak to masses nor the masses to the elites in what is claimed to be the largest democracy in the world.

The same "communications gap" is evident with regard to translations, children's books, programmed learning in a basic vocabulary, the production of learning aids, modern teaching methods and easy availability of sub-titling and dubbing equipment. In Delhi or Bhopal, it is easier and more worthwhile for an Indian to enroll in a well-organised, interesting and structured course in French, German, Italian, Russian or, more recently, Japanese and Arabic, than to learn Tamil, Gujarati or Oriya.

No Indian language has been made attractive or easy to learn and no bridges have been built between the various languages.

There is, however, good news. Although India remains extremely colonial in its approach to language, it has one great advantage. Despite varying scripts, the scheduled languages, barring Urdu, have the same or a very similar alphabet. All Indian languages, moreover, are phonetic. Roman letters are graphic and alphabets are grouped to make syllables. In Indian scripts the basic graphic unit is a phonetic syllable or akshara which is normally a conjunct letter made up of two, three or more alphabets. Since Indian scripts follow a similar phonetic logic and structure, it is possible to evolve a common code for information processing. With the introduction of photocomposition, a [illegible] punching a standardised keyboard [illegible] depresses appropriate keys for the [illegible] computer, responding to a code, to form required phonetic aksharas as [illegible] characters. This makes for speed, efficiency aesthetics and versatility over the [illegible] very inadequate keyboards and permits [illegible] literation from one language to another.

New Technology: The 350 or [illegible] dividual graphic symbols in all the scheduled languages (or 132 symbols in combined Devanagri alone) can be reduced to [illegible] vowels and 36 consonants or 52 aksharas all. To accommodate a few sounds peculiar certain Indian languages, the Central [illegible] Directorate has evolved an enhanced extended Parivardhit Devanagri which provides a scientific, logical and universally applicable basis for an Indian script code information interchange being designed the Electronics Commission. With transliteration capability derived from the common phonetic logic of Indian scripts, it will possible to key in on one language and print out in another language through computerised intelligence, storage and memory. Confrontation between Indian languages will disappear and their common Sanskrit and other roots will instead come into play. Cross-cultural exchange will follow, with one language freely borrowing more and ative words and phrases from another envisaged in Article 351 of the Constitution.

The hardware has been evolved. Research Institute for Newspaper Development, Madras, the National Centre for Software Development and Computing Techniques of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) Bombay, National Informatics Centres, Delhi and others are on the job. There are wide areas ahead. It now requires software initiatives and decisions on the part of writers, [illegible] ationists, journalists, advertisers, [illegible] raphers, printers, communicators and policy-makers to seize the opportunity. The country can no longer afford to remain without a sensible and comprehensive language policy. If all scheduled Indian languages grow as vehicles of communication and creative expression, "official language" will automatically come into its own without bureaucratic interventions or rancour. Let the horse be placed where it belongs—ahead of the cart. Facilities and systems must be developed—without delay. Communication is an input for development and integration. Let there be an end to non-communication.

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Machel: looking westwards

MESSAGE FROM MOZAMBIQUE

PRESIDENT Samore Machel of Mozambique flew into New Delhi last fortnight having ushered in some significant changes in his foreign policy. Though his domestic policies continue to follow a Marxist path he is gradually turning away from communist influence and looking increasingly to the West for aid. He recently fired 400 East German trained security policemen whom he accused of being "torturers" and is replacing Soviet military advisers with Tanzanians. Meanwhile, private companies from the US, Japan, Spain, Holland, Britain and France are highly active in Mozambique and most of them are also heavily involved in aid. The dramatic change occurred after the Soviets turned down Machel's request to join Comecon, the communist trade grouping. Since then, he has started looking westwards and already the switch has made significant changes in Mozambique's economy.

CAIRO'S FRENCH CONNECTION

EGYPTIAN efforts to become independent of US and Soviet arms supplies reached a major milestone last month. Under a secret agreement signed in Paris, France has agreed to set up a sophisticated missile industry to update the Soviet missiles currently in use with the Egyptian armed forces. The Rs 700-crore deal, which will also cover missile manufacture, will mainly be implemented by a consortium comprising the Thomson-Brandt-CSF group. The idea is to combine western and Soviet missile technology to keep Egypt's missile weaponry up to date and set up a production base for eventual manufacture in Egypt. Egyptian engineers are already mass-producing Soviet Kalashnikov rifles and a copy of the Soviet multiple rocket launcher MB-21 at its defence plant in Saqr.

CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK

NORTH Korea is quietly preparing for a major change at the top. Though one of the most closed communist states, recent reports from the country indicate positively that the present ruler, President Kim Il Sung, 69, is dangerously ill and does not have very long to live. He has been suffering from a serious heart ailment and high blood pressure and has been receiving specialised treatment from Soviet doctors. Though no official announcement has been made so far, the way has clearly been paved for a smooth transition in the best dynastic tradition. His place will be taken by his son, Kim Jong Il, 41, who has been receiving effusive outpourings of praise in the official media. His birthday earlier this year was declared a national holiday and celebrated all over the country. It was described officially as "The nation's greatest jubilee" and left nobody in any doubt who North Korea's new absolute ruler would be.

GATHERING OF EAGLES

WITH Ayatollah Khomeini rapidly ailing and increasingly isolated, the forces jockeying for a possible takeover bid once he goes have started assembling, both inside and outside the country. While the domestic groups have no clear front-runner as yet, the external hopefuls seem to have settled their squabbles in the face of a common goal. The most powerful group at present is a recently-assembled faction led by two exiled Iranian generals, Golam Ali Oveisi and Bahram Aryana who have signed an agreement in Paris to combine their forces. Their combined strength has been further buttressed by another significant recruit, Ali Amini, former Iranian prime minister. Latest reports say that the group is now likely to be strengthened by a number of former military leaders, including Admiral Ahmad Madeni, former head of the Iranian naval forces who was forced into exile during the post-Khomeini crackdown in Iran.

RESETTLING REFUGEES

THE pressure on Pakistan from the 2.5 million refugees who have fled from neighbouring Afghanistan is likely to be eased fairly soon. Negotiations to resettle the refugees in the West are almost complete. A large number of Afghans could find themselves raising sheep in the Alaskan hills while another, larger group are destined for the hills of Anatolia in Turkey—both areas of sparse population. Already, US and Turkish officials are in Pakistan's refugee camps to select their new immigrants and arrange to have them transported. However, their efforts will still leave at least 2 million refugees in Pakistan.

Moi: making sure

ALMIGHTY MOI

LAST month's cabinet changes in Kenya are viewed as just one more step in President Daniel Arap Moi's efforts to acquire more power for the presidency and, at the same time, ensure that no potential threats to his rule emerge in the foreseeable future. Among the cabinet changes was Mwai Kibaki, till now the second most powerful man in Kenya. Kibaki still functions as vice-president but has been deprived of the key post of finance minister which lessens his influence considerably. Another potential threat, Charles Njonjo, the home minister, has also been deprived of his portfolio and now heads the relatively unimportant ministry of constitutional affairs. Simultaneously, Moi has brought the army, air force, navy, police and intelligence forces under his direct command which means that mild-mannered Moi is almost as powerful as his predecessor and the architect of independent Kenya—Jomo Kenyatta—ever was.

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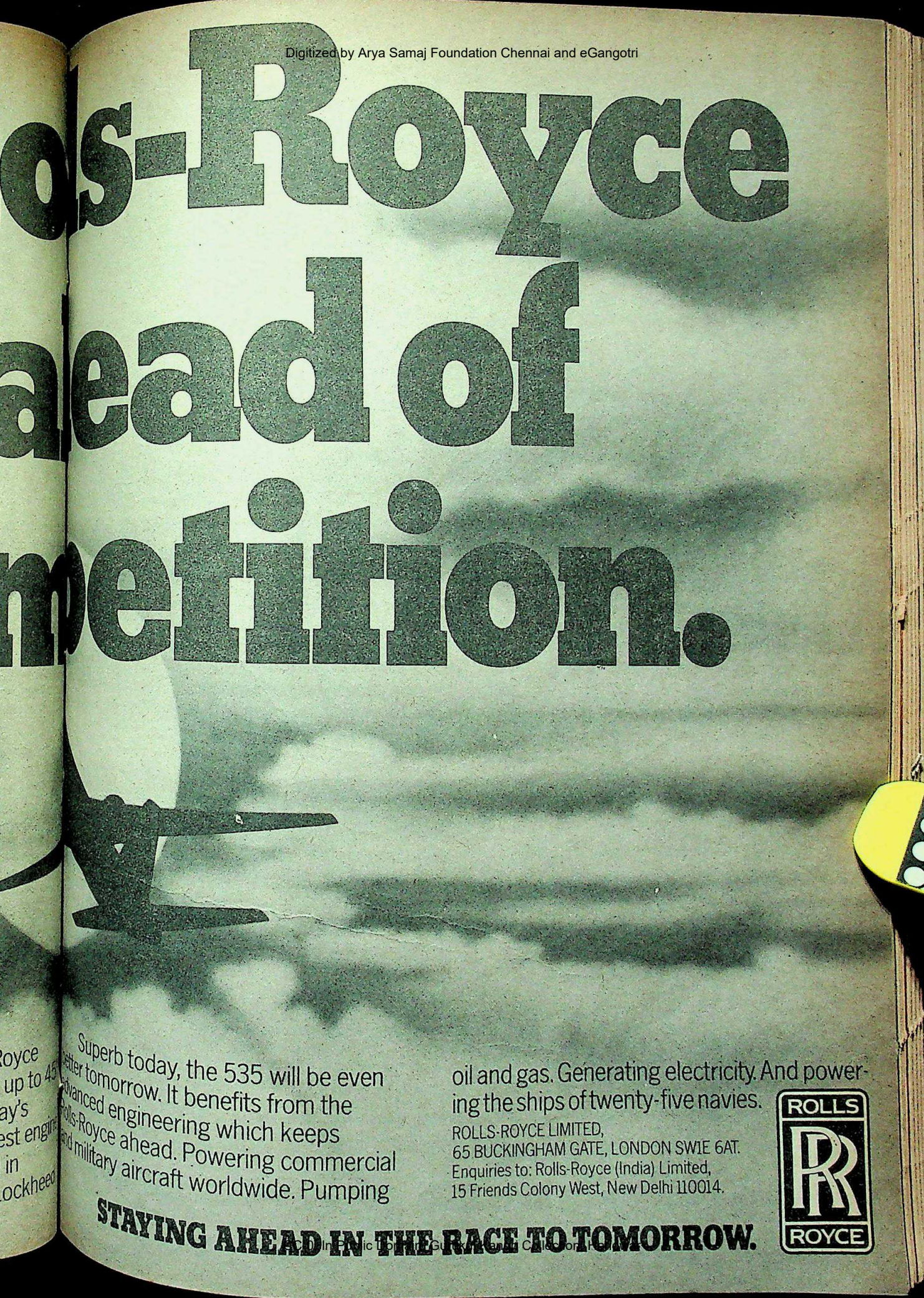

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Apocalypse Now!

DR STRANGELOVE is alive and well and living in the White House. His words and actions, deliberately tailored to prepare the world for the possibility of what was once regarded as unthinkable—thermonuclear war—have caused a chain reaction of queasiness that is rapidly turning into panic among thinking Americans.

Ronald Reagan and his musclemen-advisers' theory of better-irradiated-than-Red is now openly being challenged and savaged by American politicians belonging to both parties, and by leading academicians and elder statesmen as the Administration embarks on the largest and most unprecedented arms buildup in history.

The goal of the United States since the atomic explosions on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was to deter nuclear war. But now there is increasing talk of not only fighting but also of winning one. And this is not just speculation. The President's budget message for the 1983 fiscal year clearly states: "US defence policies ensure our preparedness to respond to and, if necessary, *successfully fight either conventional or nuclear war.*"

Ill-conceived Belligerence: Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Jimmy Carter indulged in a few instances of nuclear bellicosity, such as when he publicly vowed to deter any aggression in the Gulf region "by any means possible". Since Carter and his advisers had been repeatedly told by their own intelligence sources that they had little chance of winning a conventional war in that region against the Soviets, the former president was obviously alluding to nuclear war. But Carter was an on-again-off-again belligerent who swung back and forth between religious pacifism and military rhetoric.

His wavering support for the deep-penetration B-1 bomber was small comfort for the hawks intent on preparing Uncle Sam to fight a "winnable nuclear war". At best, Carter's policy was no more than an ill-defined and ill-conceived idea of a "limited nuclear option" that would in some mystical fashion enhance America's "countervailing strategy"—a euphemism for a first strike capability.

Reagan's is a more brutal and forthright scheme that lends an eerie credence to what Eugene Rostow, director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency said six years ago: "We are living in a pre-war and not a post-war world." The Reaganites have plunged international relations to the depths of a dictum made fashionable a century ago by Baron von Clausewitz who propounded the idea of war as an extension of diplomacy. But to view *nuclear* conflict as "a continuation of political relations, a carrying out of the same by other means", is but another example of the neo-Neanderthal thinking that sometimes afflicts the White House in the realm of foreign relations.

Historian Henry Steele Commager noted in a recent dissent that the catechism that informs official American ideology "is rooted in emotion rather than in reason; it is negative rather than positive in its objectives; it is inspired by fear rather than by confidence; it is inconsistent and even contradictory in logic... we no longer appear to be masters of our own destiny... but react with almost Pavlovian response to the real or imagined policies of the Soviet Union".

Imperilled Humanity: The United States has spent more than $2,000 billion on the military since World War II. The Reagan Administration proposes to spend about $1.5 trillion on the military during the next five years. Out of this, $220 billion are to be spent on land, sea and air-based missiles as well as missile defence systems in an effort to achieve the capacity to fight and win a nuclear war. The US plans to build 17,000 new nuclear weapons in the next decade. And the Soviet Union which, unlike the United States, has repeatedly and expressly denied that it seeks a first strike capability, will have no other option but to play keeping up with the Strangeloves.

There are already more than 50,000 nuclear warheads in the world. They possess the explosive force of 20 billion tons of TNT—nearly one-and-a-half million times the power of the bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima. But the world has declined, on the whole, to think about them, reflects Jonathan Schell, author of *The Fate of the Earth—A Republic of Insects and Grass*. Adds Schell: "We have thus far failed to fashion, or to discover within ourselves, an emotional or political or intellectual response to them... When one tries to face the nuclear predicament, one feels sick, whereas when one pushes it out of one's mind, as apparently one must do most of the time in order to carry on with life, one feels well again. But this feeling of well-being is based on a denial of the most important reality of our time, and therefore is in itself a kind of sickness. A society that systematically shuts its eyes to an urgent peril to its physical survival and fails to take any steps to save itself cannot be called psychologically well."

But Schell is not totally disillusioned. He senses a "stirring awake" both in Europe and in the United States on this most cosmic of all issues. United States Senators Edward Kennedy, a Democrat, and Mark Hatfield, a Republican have co-sponsored a joint resolution—backed by 19 other senators—asking for an immediate freeze on nuclear weapons pending renewed arms reduction talks with the Soviet Union. A similar resolution has been sponsored in the House of Representatives by another 101 Congressmen. Said Kennedy during a recent debate on the subject: "Together, the United States' and the Soviet Union's strategic nuclear warheads (add up to) four tons of TNT for every man, woman and child presently living on this planet."

Sensible Demands: The Kennedy-Hatfield resolution calls for "major, mutual and verifiable reductions through annual percentages or equally effective means". Last fortnight, at a press conference, Reagan flatly rejected the freeze resolution but said that he had invited the Soviet Union for talks on reduction of nuclear weapons, probably this summer. Significantly, Reagan gave his support to another proposal which calls for a freeze only after the US has closed the supposed gap in areas where the Administration says the Soviets have an edge. But that could easily prove a vicious circle. Former Senator William Fullbright, still considered one of the leading foreign policy luminaries of the country, has also expressed fears that Reagan is out to fight and win a nuclear war. George Kennan, former ambassador to the Soviet Union, Dean Acheson and Admiral Hyman Rickover, the whiz-kid behind America's nuclear navy, have asked for cuts of at least 50 per cent in the nuclear armouries of both the Soviet Union and the United States. Under one proposal, the cuts would be achieved by 7 per cent annual reductions spread over an equal number of years.

The Senate action was prompted in part by the grim political reality of seething discontent within Nato over the Reagan Administration's nuclear arms initiatives. These policies, says Kennedy, "appear hostile to arms control and speak too casually of nuclear exchanges in Europe. The fastest way to fray the Western Alliance, and to encourage the disastrous course of unilateral

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disarmament in Europe, is to permit the perception that the United States is a barrier to mutual arms control. We must be the nation that clearly proposes, not opposes, progress on this issue."

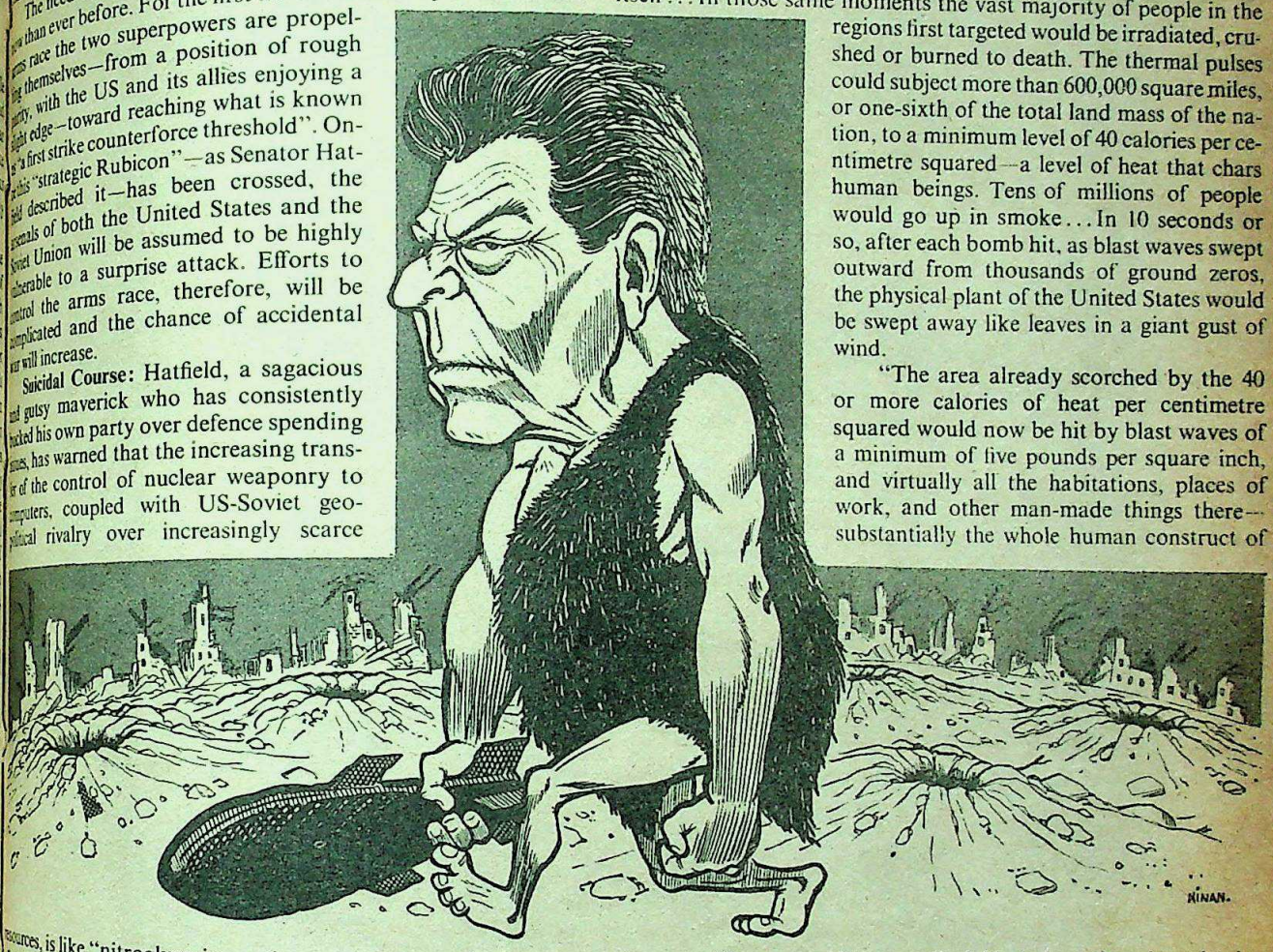
The need to control nuclear weapons is perhaps more urgent now than ever before. For the first time in the history of the nuclear arms race the two superpowers are propelling themselves—from a position of rough parity, with the US and its allies enjoying a slight edge—toward reaching what is known as a first strike counterforce threshold". On this "strategic Rubicon"—as Senator Hatfield described it—has been crossed, the arsenals of both the United States and the Soviet Union will be assumed to be highly vulnerable to a surprise attack. Efforts to control the arms race, therefore, will be complicated and the chance of accidental war will increase.

Suicidal Course: Hatfield, a sagacious and gutsy maverick who has consistently bucked his own party over defence spending issues, has warned that the increasing transfer of the control of nuclear weaponry to computers, coupled with US-Soviet geopolitical rivalry over increasingly scarce resources, is like "nitroglycerin coating a matchstick. This layering of military advances over global economic uncertainties will likely fuse into a volatile, potentially explosive whole".

What is frightening is that within the last two years US computers have malfunctioned 147 times signalling a Soviet strategic attack. Four such incidents resulted in orders to strategic forces to go on alert. On November 9, 1979 a programming error caused the computers to signal a Soviet submarine alert. According to the Pentagon it took six hair-raising minutes before command officials identified the mistake.

If the first strike brinkmanship being practised by the Reagan administration continues—and the SALT II negotiations are to end in 1985—the Soviets and the US would each wind up with about 25,000 nuclear warheads apiece. It is for this reason that Reagan's critics are asking for an immediate moratorium on further nuclear weapons. A moratorium on new weapons would also mean a freeze on the acquisition of a first strike capability.

Several studies have concluded there is no winnable nuclear war. There is no "limited" nuclear war. Everybody loses. In any such confrontation the earth itself, in the words of Senator Kennedy, would become an endangered species. Even President Eisenhower remarked in 1956 that one day both sides would have to meet at the conference table with the understanding that the era of armaments has ended and that the human race must conform its actions to this truth or die".



Terrifying Prospect: Schell offers this sobering description of a 10,000 megaton attack on the United States: "In the first moments flashes of white lights would suddenly illumine large areas of the country as thousands of suns, each one brighter than the sun itself... In those same moments the vast majority of people in the regions first targeted would be irradiated, crushed or burned to death. The thermal pulses could subject more than 600,000 square miles, or one-sixth of the total land mass of the nation, to a minimum level of 40 calories per centimetre squared—a level of heat that chars human beings. Tens of millions of people would go up in smoke... In 10 seconds or so, after each bomb hit, as blast waves swept outward from thousands of ground zeros, the physical plant of the United States would be swept away like leaves in a giant gust of wind.

"The area already scorched by the 40 or more calories of heat per centimetre squared would now be hit by blast waves of a minimum of five pounds per square inch, and virtually all the habitations, places of work, and other man-made things there—substantially the whole human construct of the United States would be vaporized, blasted or otherwise pulverized out of existence..."

EVEN a 20 megaton bomb groundburst on New York would produce a fallout over an 8,000 square mile area dooming about 20 million people—10 per cent of the entire United States population. An attack on a nuclear reactor with even a small bomb, according to researchers, would have devastating consequences. "The destruction of a reactor with a nuclear weapon, even of relatively small yield such as a crude terrorist nuclear device would produce a national catastrophe of lasting consequences." It is an "oddity of life", says Schell that in building nuclear power plants nations are vulnerable to "catastrophic devastation and long-term contamination of their territories by enemies who manage to get hold of a few nuclear weapons".

Unwinnable War: The combination of blast waves, thermal pulses and accumulated fallout "dash irrevocably" the often expressed hope that a country can survive a limited nuclear attack, says Schell. A single megaton—the explosive yield of 80 Hiroshimas—would be catastrophic. Ten megatons "would leave any nation on earth devastated beyond anything in our historical experience".

Notwithstanding these ghoulish futuristic scenarios of the hell of nuclear destruction, the United States persists in publicly

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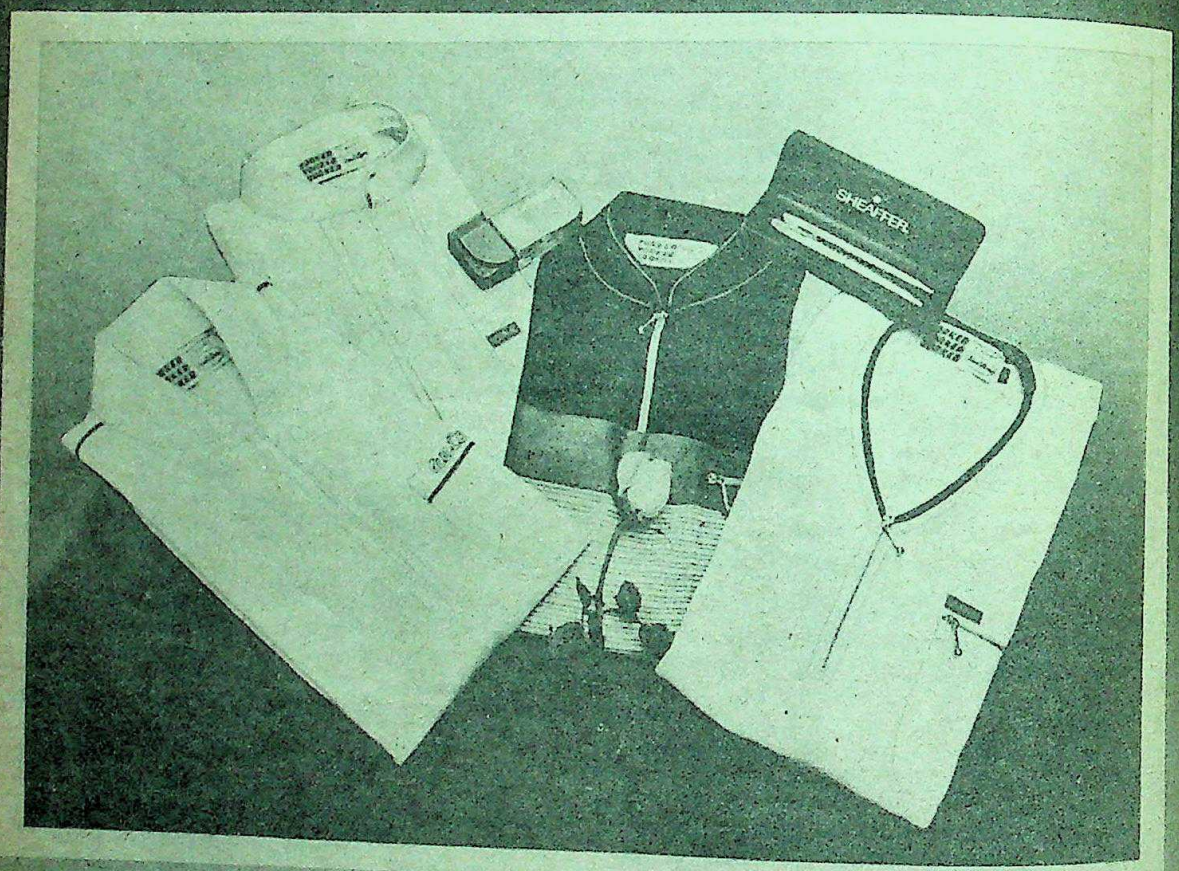
YORKER YORKER YORKER

Fashion Shirts for all Occasions



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...ncing the doctrine of a "successful" nuclear war. Defence ...retary Caspar Weinberger said on November 3, 1981: "We set ...d to achieve improved capabilities to enhance deterrence and US ...abilities to *prevail* should deterrence fail." In January of the ...t year Weinberger had stated: "I think we need to have a ...interforce capability. Over and above that, I think we need to ...e a war fighting capability."

What is maddening about America's hop-step-and-jump into ...lear superiority is that it is logistically, politically, and militarily ...ntuous. The Soviets now have about 7,000 warheads which can ...launched within hours and destroy every American city with a ...lation over 5,000. On the other side, just two American ...marines capable of launching nuclear weapons could within ...utes destroy each of the 240 Soviet cities with population over ...000. Fifteen such subs are constantly on patrol along with ...dreds of aircraft.

An American congressional delegation led by Senators Alan ...nston of California and Charles MacMathias of Maryland ...ited the Soviet leaders last September and returned with the ...inct impression that the Soviets did not believe in a "first strike" ...ability and were convinced that a nuclear war is unwinnable. ...hnev, who has staked his entire political reputation and his ...e in history on détente, has ...e fresh offers to the United ...es that he will back off from ...loying SS-20 missiles in East...n Europe. Reagan has merely ...ffed instead of making a con...ing response.

Persisting Folly: Senator ...an Cranston remarked re...ently: "After many months of ...ntradictory and sometimes bel...gerent statements on the subject ...f nuclear weapons and arms ...ntrol, Reagan has responded ...o public outcry in Europe and ...rowing concern at home by taking ...ew initiatives in the arms control ...ea insofar as nuclear weapons ...eployed in Europe are concer...ed. He has not yet made clear ...is position on negotiations on USSR strategic weaponry."

> **What is maddening about America's hop-step-and-jump into nuclear superiority is that it is logistically, politically and militarily gratuitous.**

The buildup continues. The Centre for Defence Information, a ...restigious Washington-based military think-tank which is usually ...oderate in its view has sounded the alarm that the danger of ...uclear war is increasing despite attempts to revive confidence in ...egotiations. Reagan and his advisers, the centre avers, "appear to ...ve psychologically declared war on the Soviet Union".

In order to achieve this aim the US has given top priority to ...eveloping the accuracy of ICBMs and other nuclear weapons to ...estroy small, hardened targets such as missile silos and command ...osts. The strategic arms programme has virtually been freed ...om budgetary restraints, while conventional forces have not. The ...entre's comprehensive survey shows:

► The Reagan Administration is forging ahead with the MX ...issile plan. The MX's main characteristic is its hard target-killing ...apability with great accuracy. A hard target-killing missile is ...ecessary only for initiating a pre-emptive disabling nuclear strike ...t Soviet nuclear forces.

► The Administration has initiated a new programme aimed at ...mproving the delivery of the Minuteman III and MM II missiles. ...he former carries three warheads and the latter one. These land-...ased missiles will now be fitted on EC-135 aircraft in order to give ...ommanders the ability to launch missiles from the air.

► Other lethal improvements on the MM IIIs include doubling their explosive power, remote retargeting of each missile within 25 minutes and the entire force in 10 hours, and upgrading of silos.

► The long-range bomber force consisting primarily of 347 B-52s and 62 FB-IIIs is being upgraded. The bomber force carries 23 per cent of America's nuclear weaponry and yet half the megatonnage. These bombers are being modified and fitted with new electronic equipment as well as air-launched Cruise missiles. Reagan has approved the building of new B-1 bombers which are specially designed to penetrate targets deep within the Soviet Union.

► Trident-1 missiles are being backfitted on the 12 Lafayette and Benjamin Franklin class Poseidon submarines. The Trident weapons are more than twice as powerful as the Poseidon (C3) weapons with a range of 4,000 miles as opposed to 2,500 for the Poseidon missile. The first nine Trident submarines are expected to be complete by 1987. The Trident is the largest submarine that the US has ever built and is capable of carrying 24 missiles as compared with the Poseidon and Polaris which carry 16. The Trident's total warheads will amount to about 20 megatons of destructive power. (All the US bombs dropped on Japan and Europe during World War II equalled 2 megatons in explosive power.)

► The $15 billion Cruise missile programme is proceeding apace. The Cruise is a pilotless, jet-propelled airplane that can follow an evasive course in the air below radar cover and is capable of striking within 200 feet of a target 1,500 miles away. The missile will be air, ground and sea-launched.

► The Pershing II missile—feared most by the Soviets—gives the army the capability of striking deep into Soviet territory. The missile—ultimately to be based in Europe—can travel a 1,000-mile distance within four minutes and strike within a 100 feet of its target. It is the most accurate ballistic missile in the world.

Mounting Concern: This vulgar display of thermonuclear muscle has not gone unnoticed in America. The European anti-nuclear peace movement is gradually spreading to American shores. The Kennedy-Hatfield resolution reflects considerable popular sentiment. The spectre of radiation, firestorms, 500-mile-an-hour winds and collapsing buildings has prompted considerable concern, not just among ordinary citizens but among leading scientists.

Helen Caldicott, a noted paediatrician at Harvard Medical School recently quit her lucrative job to form an anti-nuclear arms buildup organisation called Physicians for Social Responsibility. She calls her crusade the ultimate form of "preventive medicine". Her organisation already has 10,000 members from across the world and about 200 new ones are joining each week.

In the state of Connecticut, the Coalition for a Nuclear Arms Freeze has already amassed 30,000 signatures on its petitions. And thousands of Californians have signed a petition to place a nuclear freeze referendum on the state's 1982 ballot. In his resolution, Senator Kennedy quoted this passage from Jonathan Schell:

"These bombs were built as 'weapons' for 'war' but their significance greatly transcends war and all its outcomes. They grew out of history, yet they threaten to end history. They were made by men, yet they threaten to annihilate men. They are a pit into which the whole world can fall—a nemesis of all human intentions, actions and hopes."

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Thapa (far right) and ex-prime minister Bista (far left) and Giri (third from left): unruffled by dissent

NEPAL

Controlled Fission

THE SECOND National Pancha Convention held in the picturesque capital of this mountainous kingdom last month was, in simple parlance, no more than a family get-together. It brought together—for the first time in the ruling Panchayat system's 21-year-old history—an unequalled number of 1,245 delegates and 245 observers under one roof. Among other things, the convention was expected to pass a no-confidence motion against the incumbent Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa. But when the four-day, Rs 1 million jamboree finally concluded its proceedings at the Royal Nepal Academy building in Kathmandu, Thapa appeared to have emerged stronger.

The convention was called for primarily by dissidents within the Panchayat hierarchy who are opposed to the Thapa Government. In its two-decade history, the Panchayat system has witnessed the office of the prime minister change hands at least 10 times among three personalities: Kirtinidhi Bista, Tulsi Giri, and Surya Bahadur Thapa. It has become axiomatic among former Panchayat ministers to join the Opposition bandwagon whenever the ruling coterie extended its mandate beyond a certain point. The present convention tried in vain to achieve that purpose by hoping to pass a no-confidence motion against the prime minister—a verdict that was the sole prerogative of the palace until last year's general elections which brought Thapa to power.

As the convention got underway, it became evident that if the delegates were allowed to speak at will, the proceedings could drag on for the better part of a month. The 700 delegates who did speak were allocated three minutes each. The short duration of time, however, did not seem to have deterred the delegates from hurling invectives at the Government. Many speakers denounced the Thapa Government by alleging rampant corruption and it seemed as if the criticism was tolerated in keeping with the 'democratic' nature of the convention. If the majority of the delegates, handpicked by Thapa, chose to remain silent, they seemed to have only followed the footsteps of their predecessors who have realized which side their bread is buttered.

Futile Exercise: Prime Minister Thapa has in the past three years of his premiership shown an uncanny ability to shoulder criticism—especially of the type emanating from the fourth estate in Nepal. Scuffles broke out at the convention on several occasions when delegates from the Terai region of Nepal, bordering India, chose to speak in Hindi. A delegate who called for a continued ban on the Government-backed student union, popularly known as the Mandale, was roughed up by the energetic youth wing of the panchayat cadre that were present at the gathering. Apart from the smear war, however, the convention accomplished little more than chipping away at the foundations of a stronger government headed by a more confident Thapa, secure in his seat.

What was perhaps more significant about the convention was the party-like character in which it was conducted. Although parties are openly canvassing for support, and organising meetings, the Nepalese Constitution does not allow any parties and stresses the "partyless" nature of the Panchayat system that has held sway for the past 21 years. Observers at the convention pointed out that the day may not be far when one-party rule becomes an accepted fact. Critics also point out that the Panchayat system appears to have headed back to the pre-referendum days.

"I voted in the referendum for a Panchayat with reforms," says Bishnu Raj "what we have today is neither the old Panchayat nor the reformed one." There are hardliners within the Panchayat hierarchy, like former prime minister Tulsi Giri, who advocate throttling back on liberalisation. Giri also opposes the entry into the Panchayat fold of defectors from the banned Nepali Congress Party like the former protege of B.P. Koirala, Parsu Narayan Chaudhari. According to Giri, Chaudhari has rejected the verdict of the referendum, boycotted the elections, and therefore cannot be accepted into the Panchayat fold. Chaudhari, for his part, has not only shed the Congress skin, but—if his speech at the convention was any indication—he also appears to be briskly climbing up the Panchayat ladder.

Thapa's adept handling of the Opposition's moves to his own benefit at the convention once again proved his acumen for adroit manipulations. For the intelligentsia of Kathmandu who had expected plenty of fireworks, the convention was a virtual anti-climax. —ASHOK R. PANDEY with KUNDA DIXIT in Kathmandu

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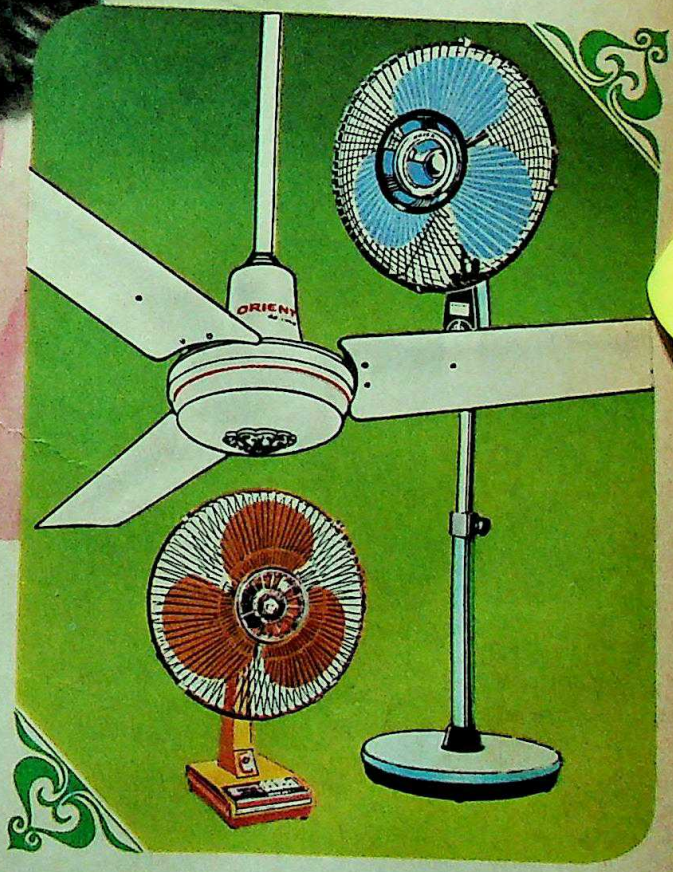

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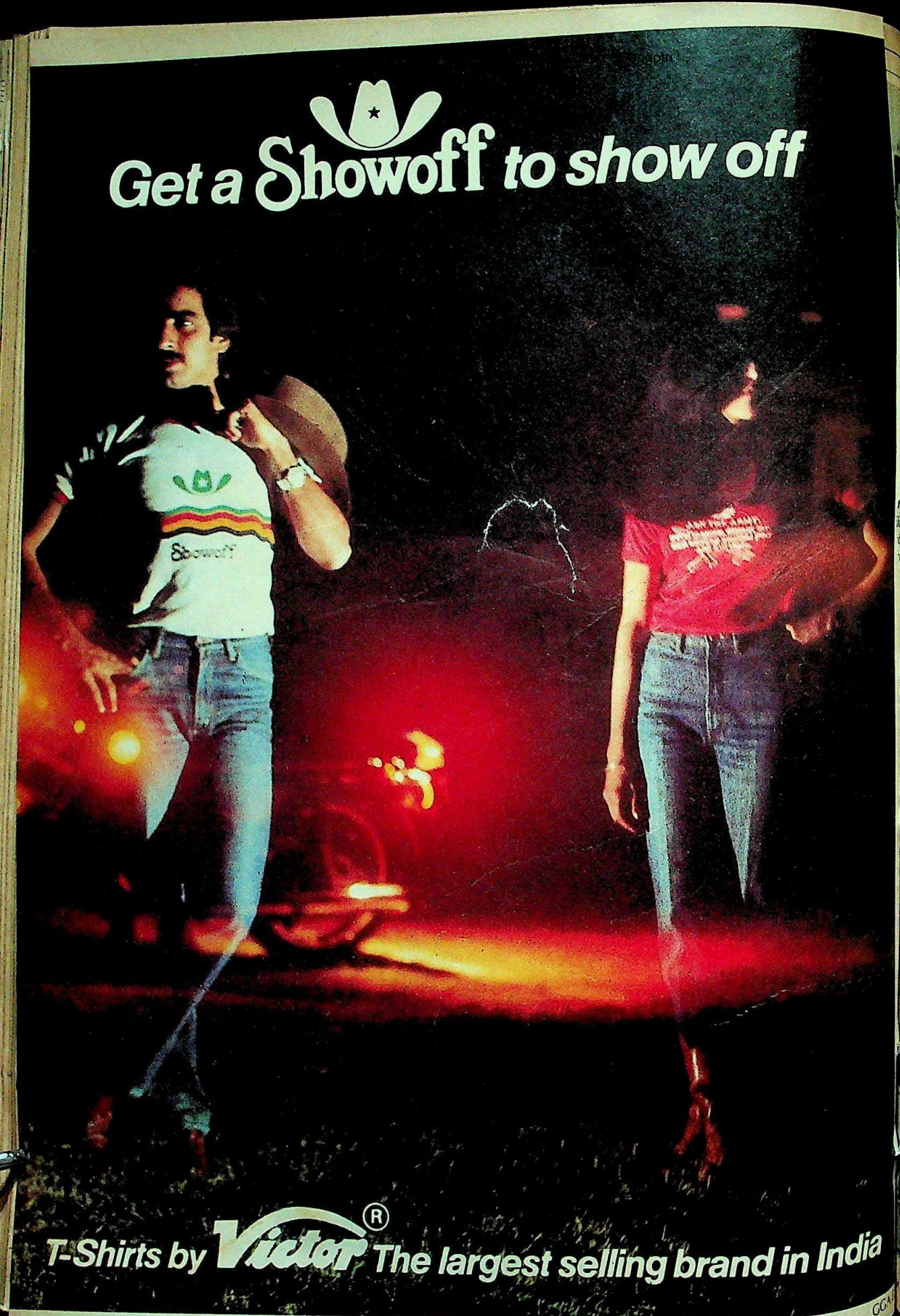

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PAKISTAN

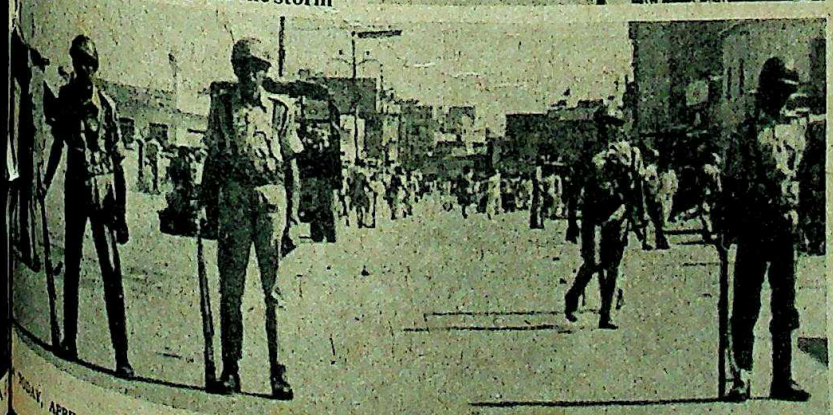
Coming Confrontation

DURING a traditional little ceremony last fortnight in General Dynamic's sprawling plant in Fort Worth, the rakish fuselage of a gleaming new fighter was painted with the Pakistan Air Force insignia in the presence of Pakistan's man in Washington, Lieutenant-General Ejaz Aziz. The event, however, could offered scant comfort to Pakistan President Zia-ul-Haq, back in Islamabad. For, the external threat to Pakistan, whether real or imaginary, had paled considerably in comparison to a more immediate and certainly more tangible, threat building up at home.

Zia is no stranger to internal threat but there was a certain malevolence and finality about one that has not been in evidence before. Above all, it was a threat that emerged from a bewildering variety of sources. In Karachi, last month, for the first time since Zia assumed power almost three years ago, leaders of eight outlawed political parties met clandestinely in an undisclosed location to hammer out a common strategy for the eventual transfer of power. Barely a week later, they met again, this time, at a two-hour luncheon meeting in Karachi at the home of Maulana Nasrullah Noorani, leader of the banned right-wing Jamaiti-i-Ulema Pakistan (JUP). The meeting was significant for more than just the fact that it was naked defiance of the martial law ban on political activity. For invitations to the luncheon meeting had been extended to leading journalists in the city. For another, two of the parties represented, the JUP and the Pir Pigaro-led Muslim League (PML) had so far refused to join the six-party alliance collectively known as the MRD (Movement for the Restoration of Democracy) led by Begum Nusrat Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP). Briefing newsmen during the meeting, Noorani announced that his party was now willing to join hands with any other party, including the PPP, which believes in the restoration of democracy in Pakistan.

Crackdown: Zia's response to that particular threat was predictable. A massive, country-wide crackdown, particularly in Punjab and Sind, on known political elements of the alliance. The crackdown was essentially a pre-emptive bid against a massive anti-martial law rally planned in Karachi on Pakistan Day. The rally site in Karachi was surrounded with barbed wire and a huge complement of policemen ensured that the rally was aborted. But the message was painfully clear; the growing impatience with Zia's oft-repeated, and oft-cancelled, promises to hold early elections was turning into ugly anger. And it was an anger that was evident in almost every major city in the country.

In Peshawar, police fired tear gas and lathi-charged thousands of protestors in what was the first significant street demonstration in Pakistan after political meetings were banned almost three years ago. In Lahore, Pakistan's second-largest city strong-arm tactics by police managed to break up the demonstration by thousands of schoolteachers demanding higher pay, but only after at least 50 demonstrators had been seriously injured. The demonstration was held in open defiance of the martial law ban on public protest. Three days later, another similar demonstration by teachers in Islamabad, the capital, was pre-empted by the arrest of the protest leaders. Simultaneously, student unrest exploded across universities, many of them violent, leading to yet another indefinite shut down of colleges. And, in Larkana, at least 10,000 people from all over the country gathered in sullen silence at the grave of the executed prime minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. That the Government had no desire to interfere was evident by the fact that his daughter, Benazir, was conducted to the site by an armed escort from Almurtaza prison near Islamabad, where she is under arrest.



Begum (below) at Karachi demonstration, (right) President Zia: the eye of the storm

The general mood of defiance was tellingly reflected last fortnight in the press features on Pakistan Day. Almost all newspapers carried gloomy, introspective pieces on the state of the nation and underlying them all was a powerful note of pessimism. Though not directly stated, the unspoken message was a clear indictment of the military regime and its failure to keep its manifold promises.

Zia reacted in the only way he knows—blustering threats against the press and the Opposition. He reimposed the partially-lifted censorship laws and in a typical tirade, threatened the press with all the gracelessness of a classroom bully. "I can close all the papers tomorrow for five years and nothing will happen. You can organise rallies and I will get you arrested," he stormed at a group of newsmen in Islamabad.

On the Opposition threat, his reaction was equally predictable and about as subtle as a sledge-hammer. Individual warnings in writing were delivered to each of the opposition leaders, including Begum Nusrat Bhutto by police-escorted messengers. The warning against holding political meetings and taking out processions followed his categorical statement in Islamabad that a general election was out of question. He made it clear that he intended to stay in the saddle till his "mission" was completed. The statement was nothing new but the situation certainly was. In the statement, Zia admitted that widespread unrest in universities, both among students and teachers, heightened political activity in defiance of martial law and acts of "subversion" had created a dangerous situation. But in the coming confrontation, the greatest danger is undoubtedly to Zia himself.

—DILIP BOBB

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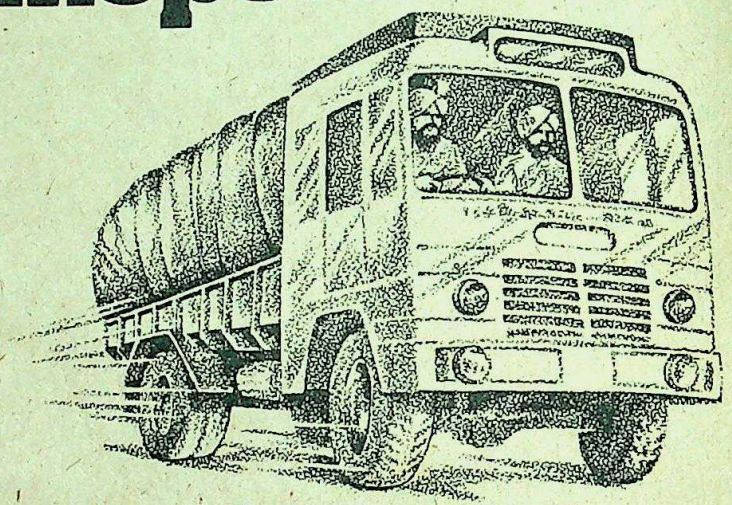

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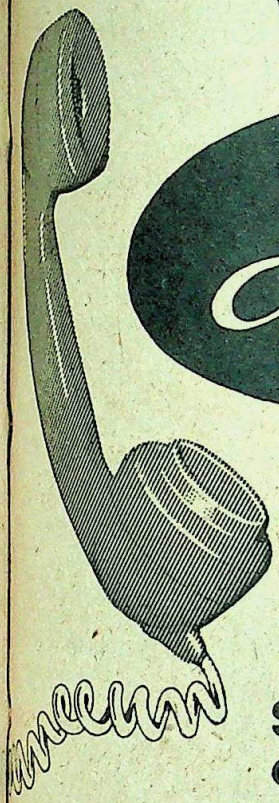

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CANADA

Sikh Versus Sikh

THE violent quarrel between liberal and conservative Sikhs in Canada has now erupted in gunfire in Canadian courts. Last month, Judge John Osler of the Ontario Supreme Court dived behind his desk as bullets ended the lives of two men and left a third critically wounded. Osler had just handed down a decision affecting two Sikh factions who have been fighting bitterly for the control of the Shiromani Sikh Society gurudwara on Pape Avenue in the east end of Toronto.

The immediate reason for the murders was that Osler had rejected an application by Kuldip Singh Samra, seeking an extension to a temporary injunction on gurudwara elections granted earlier in the month—the elections were scheduled for March 28. Said Osler: "The only noise I could hear apart from the shots was people saying, 'Oh, my God, Oh, my God'. It was all over in a few seconds." Police said a man wearing a turban shot a lawyer and the two men he was representing before dropping the chrome-plated hand-gun and fleeing. They launched an immediate man-hunt for Samra.

The dead lawyer was Oscar Fonseca, and he had successfully argued against the injunction. He was filling in for his law firm partner of 10 years, John David Philip. Philip choked back tears as he said: "My God, I can't believe it. I sent him to his death. I asked him to take this case this morning. He's got three little boys." Bhupinder Singh Pannu of Rexdale was shot in the back and the leg. A machine operator and father of three, he died in the hospital during surgery. Amarjit Singh Tatia, outgoing vice-president of the gurudwara, and f three, was in a serious but stable co with a bullet lodged in his right thi

Activist: Even as surveillance htened around the court, Toronto issued a warrant for the arrest of Sa charge of murder. He is well-know police and, according to one po "hates coppers with a passion". A activist in the Toronto Sikh comm was he who organised mass protest redressal of the grievances of hund Indians who arrived in Canada last y sought refugee status. Samra was brain behind a protest demonstra front of the Parliament buildings in last October.

The courtroom shootings ha powerful shock waves through th community and, of course, the Sik munity. Of the 2 lakh Indians in Cana majority are Sikhs. A former presider Shiromani Sikh Society, who asked n identified, said that the killings woul

SOUTH AFRICA

Breaking Taboos

A YOUNG Indian girl made history in apartheid-bound South Africa recently. Reena Singh, 17, married Amos Khumalo, a 22-year-old chef, thus blazing a new trail in inter-community marriage, which until now has usually been a one-way affair with Indian men marrying African women. Khumalo met his dusky beloved while she was still at school in the Natal town of Tongaat: Singh completed her matriculation only last year.

Singh and Khumalo: trail-blazing

The couple initially met with stiff opposition from the bride's shocked parents—when the Indians came to South Africa as suger-cane 'coolie' labourers in 1860, they stuck with their religious and cultural traditions and made very little social contact with the natives. A century has gone by but most, especially the older people, still prefer it that way.

Says Singh: "But I explained to my mother that the young people of today were not interested in race, caste or colour. I told her that the old people must accept mixed marriages not only between the different Hindu castes but also between Indians and Africans." Singh says she will adopt Khumalo's way of life; Khumalo, who incidentally is chef for Harry Oppenheimer, multi-millionaire businessman, asserts: "No matter what people say we love each other."

Long Life: Even as Singh and Khumalo break ... ground, 121-year-... Chatoo Mathura, ... lieved to be the old... Indian in the coun... reminisces about ... time when she, alo... with her mother, w... tricked into boar... a ship for South ... rica in the ea... 1890s Mathura w... originally hailed fr... Agra and speaks ... Hindi, says she ... abandoned by ... father when she ... very young, ... worked on sugar p... tations. After ... mother died, Mat... married and move... Durban, and ... farmed a plot along with her husb...

Mathura: old and still going strong

She had one son, Mahabeer, ... died recently at his home in Cape T... Her husband died 20 years ago, lea... her fairly well-off on her farm—w... she had to move out of when it ... expropriated by the Durban City Co... cil. She now lives with her grandso... the Indian township of Phoenix. ... Mathura: "I think my long life is ... mainly to hard work and the smoki... two cigarettes a day. I began smo... soon after I got married." As for l... "I would like to go there on a visi... I am too old now."

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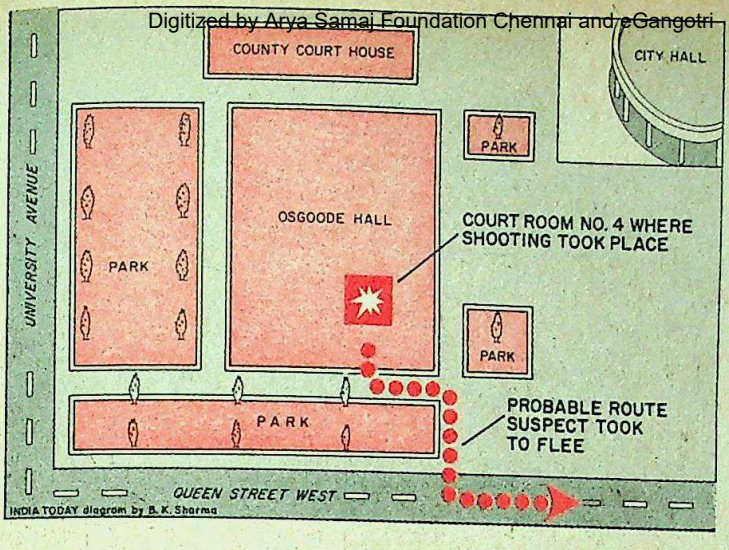
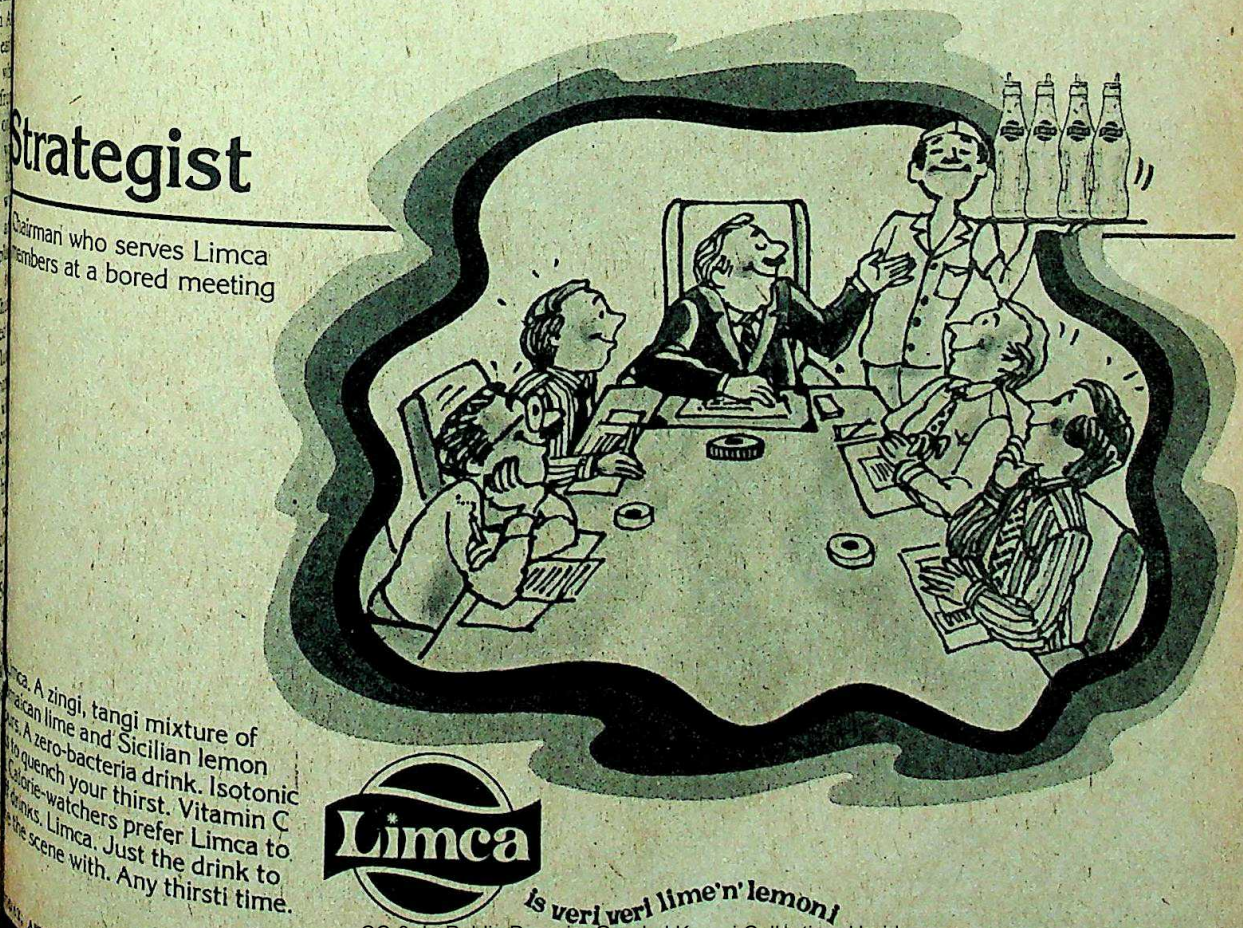


people think that "Sikhs
civilised. It will give us
me".
Pape Avenue guru-
has been fought over for
seven years. In March
bloody battle broke out
two factions and some
ple received injuries in
-for-all in which kirpans
es struck savage blows.
an Singh Jauhal, then
of the Shiromani Sikh
said young Sikhs had
use rough tactics to
trol of the shrine from
of nine-member com-
The police arrested 13 people, but
rator was obliged to drop charges
no one had been caught with wea-
his hand and there were no indepen-
nesses to the fight. All the accused
ased on $100 bail and a promise to
ce for one year.
e years later, in March 1980, vio-
oke out again at the same gurud-
After the courts were through, one
acquitted on the charge of common
another was acquitted of threatening
and a third had the complaint of
threat dismissed because it had not been properly filed. In the weeks that followed, community members complained that committee elections were not held that year and gurudwara leaders interrupted ceremonies to criticise the police for its racist policies, the Ontario Human Rights Commission for its handling of racial incidents concerning the Indian community and whites for racially motivated attacks against its members.

Tension: In July 1980, the Ontario Supreme Court ordered the leaders of the gurudwara to hold elections to the executive committee within six weeks, after a similar order issued in April had been ignored. The new members were hailed as "the very noblest group of officers" by Jaswala Grewal, Toronto travel agent and member of the committee. He said that after their election many people who had been frightened away by the violence had returned. Election time came again in March 1982, and committee members said they had warned the police that more violent confrontation was expected. Their fears were realised in a tragic manner in Osler's courtroom.

Internecine warfare is not the Sikh community's only problem. The Pape Avenue gurudwara has also been the target of a number of racially motivated attacks—in 1974 slogans were sprayed on its walls, and in 1977 Sikhs charged that they had been attacked leaving the place and that their cars and shops had been damaged. Obviously, the community needs to unite against such attacks, but the latest blow in the Sikh versus Sikh battle can only intensify such isolation. —SURESH JAIN in Toronto



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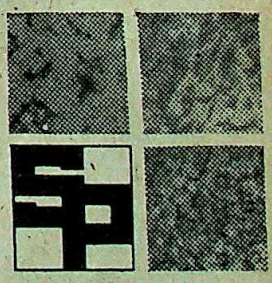

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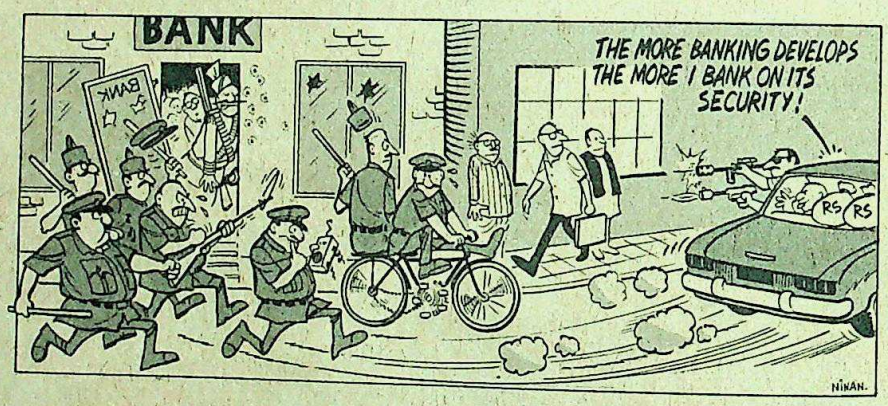
BANK SECURITY

Asking For Trouble

IN THE last 11 months Rs 1 crore has been looted from banks around the country—a fourfold increase over the Rs 22 lakh stolen in bank robberies in 1980. And, rather than taking immediate action to tighten bank security, the Government, police and bank authorities continue to pass the buck between themselves.

The soaring number of bank robberies—12 in 1979, 24 in 1980 and 40 in 1981—has left behind not only empty vaults but a trail of violence across 15 states.

Answering Members of Parliament who have been clamouring for "comprehensive and fool-proof security measures" for banks, Janardhan Poojary, Union deputy minister of finance, gave a standard reply: "The security measures in the public sector banks are constantly reviewed by the banks themselves and also by the Government. Government has also issued a number of instructions to the public sector banks towards strengthening their security arrangements."



New Trend: But the situation is grim. But for one or two of the 42 cases being investigated the men wanted for the crimes are still roaming free—free to strike again. A new trend has also emerged. Bank hold-ups, once an urban phenomena, have spread into rural areas.

Even while the hectic debate in Parliament went on, a closed-door meeting of a newly formed expert group on bank security held by the officials of the Finance Ministry on April 1, was taking stock of the problem. Their meeting was no different from the series of meetings held over the last few weeks with state government officials, bank representatives, police officials and members of the Home Ministry. Their deliberations have still not come up with a fool-proof answer. Said Arun Sinha, of the Finance Ministry, "There are far too many loopholes to plug but we have made certain suggestions to both the banks and the police."

Even while the expert group conferred, another nationalised bank announced the opening of yet another branch, their 1,000th. The Government policy of extending bank facilities to all sections of the public adds to the problem. Said Nikhil Kumar, additional commissioner of police, New Delhi Range "The banks have sprung up like mushrooms in the cities. Some tucked away on second floors in small alleys and busy market places, and in houses meant for residential purposes —none of them built for banks, with security in mind."

The phenomenon is not new, banks have been robbed before and security is the last thing banks seem to have thought off, in spite of the growing danger of thefts. A string of attempted bank burglaries in 1980 by inter-state gangs has not awakened the banks (see INDIA TODAY June 16-30, 1980). S.L. Duggal, deputy general manager of the Punjab National Bank with 30 years of banking experience to back him up commented "the burglars appear to be getting more and more sophisticated and may soon catch up with their counterparts in Europe and America who have often broken through the tightest security nets to relieve banks of crores in commando-style operations."

Emerging Pattern: The *modus operandi* of the recent hold-ups are similar, inolving inter-state gangs. Said a Home Ministry official, "The pattern of hold-ups, except in West Bengal where the incidence is the highest in India seems to be the same. The would-be bank robber vets the area, studying escape routes, banking methods and the flow of cash in the banks picked for looting. This exercise at times can stretch over two months. Although the police have not been able to verify it, the possibility of some bank employees being involved cannot be ruled out.

The south district of Delhi which has been the worst hit in recent months, also indicates a similar pattern. The common factor has been the hour when the bank robbers strike—soon after banking hours, when bank employees are busy wrapping up the day's work. The miscreants armed with guns have not shyed away from using [illegible]. Bank officials have considered issuing [illegible] to bank employees but the idea has been [illegible] down by the employees themselves. Said [illegible] "We did not join the banking services to [illegible] someone else's war."

Even West Bengal, which has the [illegible] bious distinction of the largest number of bank heists—29 banks robbed in the [illegible] three years alone—has started showing [illegible] alarming new trend. The recent capture [illegible] Jagatar Singh, the Jasse James of [illegible] Calcutta, signified a dramatic depar[illegible] from past trends. Jagatar, a north [illegible] dacoit, wanted for bank robberies in [illegible] states, was caught after he had succeeded [illegible] relieved the Alipore branch of the State [illegible] of India of Rs 27 lakh and he was caught only because a bank employee managed [illegible] overpower one member of the gang. [illegible] robbery was the first instance involving [illegible] criminals from another state. So far, [illegible] robberies in Calcutta have invariably been [illegible] organised by groups with political overtones [illegible] while the few non-political dacoities are [illegible] organised and executed by local [illegible]. The fact that West Bengal's police force [illegible] has been, for the last decade, involved almost exclusively with political elements [illegible] undoubtedly added to the vulnerability of [illegible] banks in the state.

The Finance Ministry expert group [illegible] basic security suggestions have already been accepted by [illegible] banks. They are:

- Fitting banks with collapsible shutters
- Training guards in the use of firearms
- Special guards in plain clothes,
- A simple alarm system.

But it is still a far cry from providing a viable security blanket that would deter those bent upon robbing a bank.

The Home Department officials, however, see the problem in a different light. "The problem will not just be solved by providing alarms, what we need to do is develop a good intelligence system. This is vital in both preventing a crime from taking place and following up leads after a crime has been committed." Even as the police were studying various electronic systems, the police toying with the idea of establishing an effective intelligence system and thereby throwing the task of enforcement of security back to the police, three armed men looted Rs 90,000 in cash from Sangli, a major sugar market in Maharashtra, [illegible] which has been free of the dacoity scourge.

—ASOKA [illegible]

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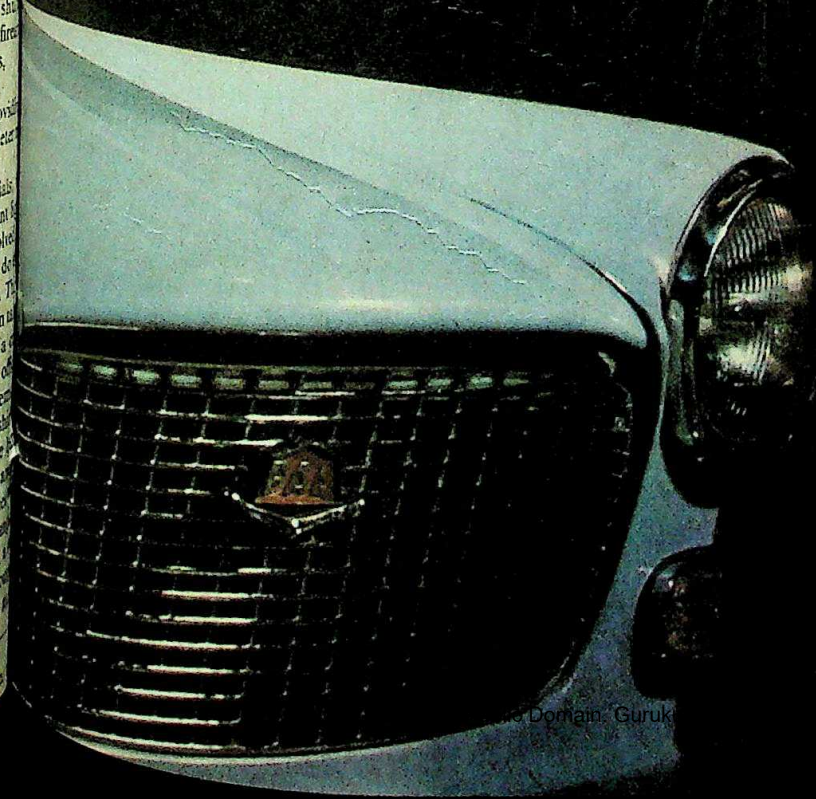

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COMMISSION

asting The Barons

THE 50s two Marwari businessmen interests in jute and a Calcutta- British jute company suddenly got in the newspaper industry. They Krishna Dalmia, who bought *The India*; Ramnath Goenka, who anding his *Indian Express* empire Company, which began buying *The Statesman*, Earliers, the Birlas, had large interests in jute, had *The Hindustan Times*.

late 50s, the big press set itself on course with the Nehru govern- the latter hit back by sticking on it 'jute press', which punned with word *jhoot* (lie). The label has stuck and subsequent govern- never tired of sus- that the big dailies were mouthpieces of jute, sugar or steel barons.

same concern haunted Press Commission mitted its 2,500-page fortnight to the formation and Broad- Ministry. Headed by K. a former Supreme eight of its 12 suggested that none of 's 32 'big' news- daily circulation of 00,000) should be con- the "dominating in- other business inter- recommended statu- on "interests" ing included) of per- other businesses to 10 per cent in a company. In other words, if the has its way, Bennett, Coleman pany, which publishes *The Times of* other journals, will slip out of the Ashok Jain, whose Sahu Jain and has controlling shares in it. Krishna Kumar Birla will have to control of *The Hindustan Times* consortium of business houses which ority shares in *The Statesman* will give these up.

sures: The report, couched in st- populist vocabulary, also suggested of measures aimed at battering the of the big press which, for some has so far been able to retain its ent character. The key recommen- are:

the space ratio between editorial ertising matter to 60:40 for big ers, 50:50 for medium newspapers and 40:60 for small newspapers;

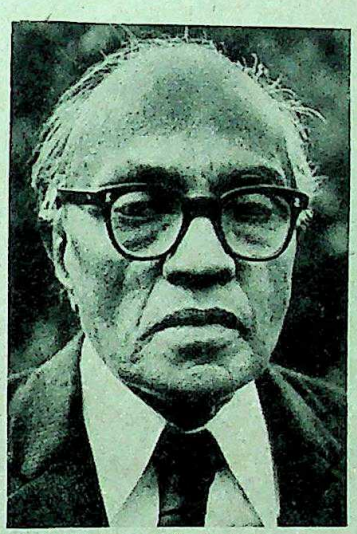
► putting a ban on allotment of newsprint to "cinema and sex magazines";

► fixing a price-page schedule which is to be worked out by an expert committee later;

► "interposition" of a board of trustees between the editor and owners of each of the big newspapers, and

► setting up a Newspaper Development Corporation which will pool development resources and will be funded by a cess and an advertisement tax.

Four members of the commission violently differed with the majority view and submitted a 100-page dissenting note which scuttled Mathew's real aim—that of obliging Mrs Gandhi's frenetic anti-press government with a unanimous report of the Press Commission. With a third of its members raising the voice of dissent, the majority report will have neither the moral sanction nor the legal authenticity to be used as cudgel by the Government in future. "The lack of unity has considerably weakened the report's impact", admitted a commission official.



Girilal Jain (left) and Mathew: difference of opinion

Invective: The dissenters include Girilal Jain, editor-in-chief of *The Times of India*, Rajendra Mathur, editor of *Nai Dunia*, H.K. Paranjape, chairman of the Railway Tariff Commission and S.K. Mukherjee, a former judge of Calcutta High Court. Their note, peppered with invective and sarcasm, charges the commission with providing weapons to the Government with which it can "cow down the press and, if necessary, strangulate it".

Clearly Mathew and his cohorts have taken their cue from Mrs Gandhi's frequent run-ins with the press, her well-known allergy towards certain newspaper groups and personalities, and her personal view of the press expressed in her recent statement: "The press is the Opposition in India—what is called the national press....just leads the Opposition. This is not reporting."

No wonder that the most vocal critic of the press among the commission members is K.R. Ganesh, a Congress(I) leader and a former Union minister of state. In fact, many of the majority-group are indirectly linked with the Congress(I), such as Ishrat Ali Siddiqui, editor of the Congress(I)-controlled *Qaumi Awaz*, a publication of the National Herald group, and Prem Chand Verma, president of Small and Medium Newspapers Association and well-known for his pro-Congress(I) leanings.

Over-kill: One of the dissenters branded the commission as a "purely political commission" which, he suspected, "had been briefed by the Government to muzzle and maim the press". If that be so, the Government is clearly going for an over-kill, because the aggregate circulation of the country's daily newspapers is less than 10 million among a population of 685 million.

However, apart from the fact that the commission lost its bite because of its internal division, the majority report was also stymied by its lack of homework, depth and corroborative evidence. This was but natural because of the haste in which the earlier commission, appointed during the Janata period, was made to resign *en bloc*, and a supposedly more amenable commission, headed by Mathew, was appointed in a haste.

Most of the groundwork done in the earlier period was dismissed straightaway but the Mathew commission had very little time left at its disposal to make up for it. An Information and Broadcasting Ministry official admitted that there was "hardly anything new" in the recommendations, and that the financial weapons suggested against the big press were really a "damp squib" because they might not be "foolproof legally".

Only one recommendation out of the nine-volume tome acquires a curious topicality: it says that sensitive private facts relating to the health, private behaviour, home life or personal or family relationships should not be touched by the press. Enforced earlier, that might have saved Mrs Gandhi a lot of worries on the Maneka front.

—SUMIT MITRA

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THE SCINDIAS

The Battle Royal

IT BEGAN as a small tiff, as all battles do. The two antagonists' identities lent it a delicious irony: Vijaya Raje Scindia, the ex-Rajmata of Gwalior, and her only son, ex-Maharaja Madhavrao. Over the years, this essentially political fight spilt out of the Gwalior palace into national attention. Today, it includes all the ingredients of a box-office block buster: a stubborn queen-mother guided by a scheming courtier, an equally determined son fighting back grimly a clutch of avaricious, unscrupulous relatives, and an occasional guru egging his particular disciple on.

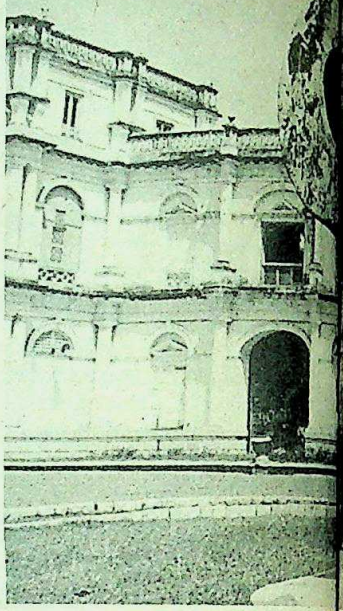
Note by note, this atonal orchestra has built up towards a noisy crescendo. The opening bars rang out on April 4, when Vijaya Raje, who is vice-president of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and a member of the Rajya Sabha, told newsmen in Gwalior that her son, a Congress(I) Lok Sabha member, had committed a most unprincely act. That afternoon, his personal secretary Mahendra Pratap Singh had put lock and seal on all doors leading to the *pièce de résistance* of the ornate, 900-room Italianate Jai Vilas Palace—the opulent Durbar Hall, the Banquet Hall, and the Council Room.

Singh defended his action by saying that he apprehended the seizure of these palace rooms by the Rajmata and her pet organisation—an educational body called Vidya Bharati, which is a thinly-veiled front for the Rashtriya Swyamsewak Sangh (RSS).

Influential Aide: Reports about the fracas omitted mentioning the man who holds centre-stage in this unfolding story—the Rajmata's personal secretary, Sardar Sambhaji Chandroji Angre. A publicity-shy recluse, Angre has come to exert a powerful—and, insists Madhavrao—malign influence over the Rajmata ever since he insinuated himself into her life soon after the death of her husband, Maharaja Jiwaji Rao Scindia, in 1960.

In February, Angre master-minded a coup that hit directly at another ruling family—the Gandhis. Soon after he became the major owner in a take-over of *Surya* magazine, the Indira-Maneka feud erupted into open revolt by Sanjay Gandhi's widow. On March 31, three days after the Lucknow convention that launched Maneka's "political career", Madhavrao lashed out at Angre in a public statement. Not only had Angre embarrassed Mrs Gandhi, his supreme leader, by purchasing *Surya*, said Madhavrao, but he had left "no stones unturned to cause a deep cleavage between me and my mother and sister in an effort to destroy my family." Angre refuses to enter the controversy which has taken on all the trappings of a political battle between the Congress(I) and the BJP. In a plainly motivated move the Income Tax Department has asked Angre to explain financial aspects of the *Surya* deal.

Madhavrao and his mother Vijaya Raje Scindia: escalating family feud



Jai Vilas Palace in Gwalior

Gwalior still rings with the echoes of days when the Scindias ruled this fief, one of the four most powerful princely in pre-Independent India. On April Gwalior's Maharajpura airport, it seem though princely privileges had never abolished. Vijaya Raje, still referred Rajmataji, was seen off by an obse knot of people. Among them was her rother Dhyanendra Singh, and Bhai Prahlad Deshmukh, secretary of the sts that were formed in 1971 to adm the vast Scindia properties.

Continuing Struggle: The Rajm flown into Gwalior two hours earlier her lawyers. Clad in her trade mar sari, carrying her *puja* paraphernal Gucci tote bag, the Rajmata told TODAY on the bumpy flight to Delhi had instructed her lawyers to file a su Gwalior Civil Court against her so Durbar Hall is not his personal pro she said. "It belongs to a trust."

The battle for the Durbar Ha mere skirmish compared to the two- struggle for control of the Scindia tr Rajmata is the chairperson of the which control the Scindia properties these administer various parts of Vilas Palace. Until May 1980, the were managed by a common group tees: the Rajmata, Madhavrao,

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Madhavrao,

Raje, Angre, and Colonel Eknath Patil who was once the private to Madhavrao's father Jiwaji. That the Rajmata quitely added two new -her stepsister Sushma Devi Singh, ain Krishnarao Shejwalkar, BJP of Parliament from Gwalior.

induction of these two trustees scales in favour of the Rajmata-camp, which flies BJP colours. rao's supporters charge that the had, by illegally altering the mi- a trustees' meeting, brought in and Shejwalkar under the catch- item that reads: "Any other that may be brought up by the This renders the two recent trustees sources close to Madhavrao, the appointment of new trustees is ant item requiring separate listing agenda. Sushma and her brother dra say this is untrue. "Madhavrao damaging himself," says the cockily Dhyanendra. "After his secretary Durbar Hall sealed, he not only police guards, but put 40 hooligans with lathis and guns, on patrolling

ncipal Players: The Rajmata's step- and Deshmukh are some of the players in this murky drama. The ude Angre's daughter Chitralekha the Rajmata's younger daughter ara Raje, and followers in the army of employees.

A day before the Rajmata's airdash to Gwalior to launch proceedings against her son, the Madhavrao faction struck another blow when Patil obtained an injunction from Senior Sub-Judge S.L. Tandon in Delhi. The stay order said that Sushma and Shejwalkar could not function as trustees, and that no trustee could sell, donate or dispose of any of the trusts' possessions. Tandon posted the case for further hearing on April 19. The affair also came up for noisy debate in the Madhya Pradesh Assembly on April 8, when supporters of the mother and the son clashed.

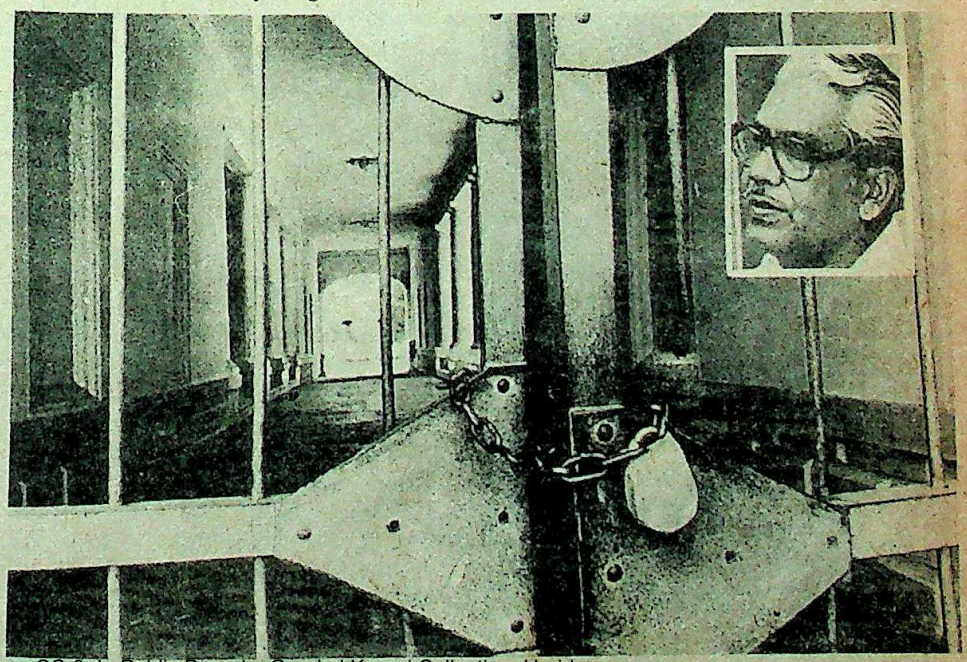
The credentials of the people in the Rajmata's camp appear to corroborate Madhavrao Scindia's followers' apprehension that the BJP and its RSS back-bone eventually want the Gwalior palace, which they say is part of the national heritage.

Sushma aside from occasionally broadcasting classical music from the Bhopal AIR station, is also the vice-president of the Madhya Pradesh BJP unit, an MLA from Karera, and the 'caretaker' of the Jiwaji Rao Scindia museum housed in the palace's west wing. Dhyanendra is the president of the state unit of the Janata Yuva Morcha (JYM), the BJP's youth wing. He is also the 'security officer' of the museum. Deshmukh was formerly the managing director of Rewa Publications, owners of one of the state's largest newspapers, *Swadesh*, which is an avowed BJP-RSS mouthpiece. Vasundhara Raje was instrumental in using her close friendship with Maneka Gandhi to bring off the sale of *Surya* to Angre.

THE latest palace conflict has come as no surprise. Trouble began in late 1980 when, with the Rajmata's blessings, the RSS conducted a *Shibir* (camp) in the palace. Last month, with the Rajmata as the president of the reception committee, the Vidya Bharati held a training camp for 200 'educationists' in the palace, having last December shifted its national headquarters from Delhi to a wing of the Jai Vilas Palace for which it pays a token monthly rent of one rupee.

Madhavrao was particularly alarmed by the Rajmata's bombshell at the March convention that she would eventually hand over the entire palace to Vidya Bharati in order to set up a "truly Indian public

The sealed-off passage of the Durbar Hall and (inset) Mahindra Pratap Singh



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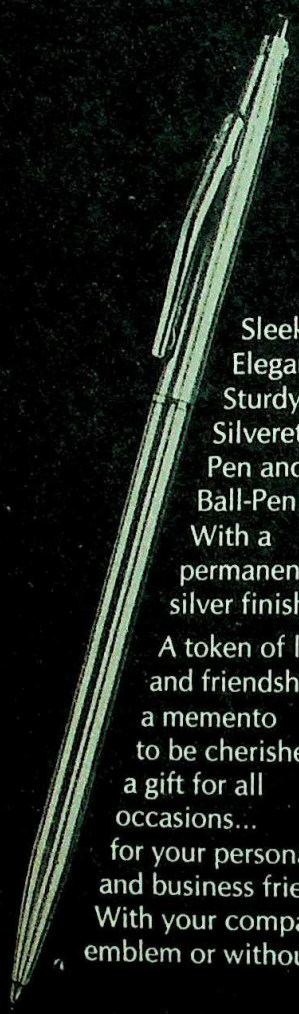

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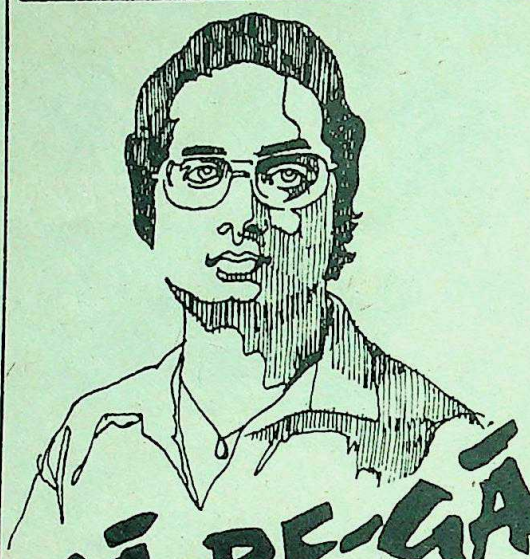

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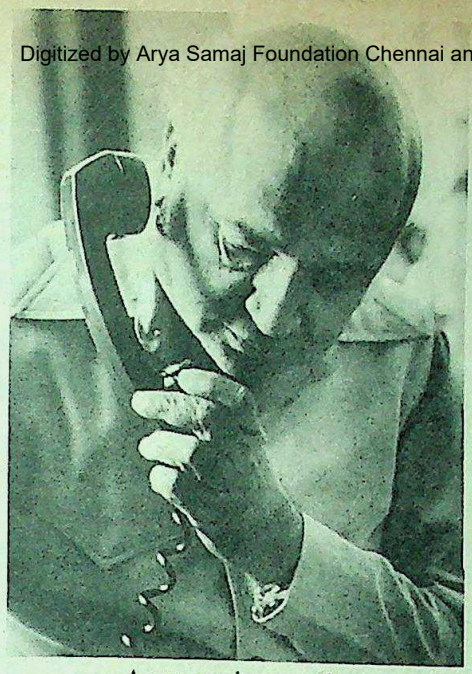
...Two other developments appear to ...precipitated the sealing of the Durbar ...On April 2, Mahendra Pratap Singh ...d notice from Deshmukh that the ...eeting of the boards of the Scindia ...ation and Rani Usha Raje Charitable ...would be held in the Council Room on ...stead of the Rajmata's quarters as ...Through Deshmukh, Vidya Bharati ...d Pratap of a plan to conduct two ...week training camps in the Council ...Certain that these requests were a ...ur to a take-over by Vidya Bharati, ...dered the doors sealed.

...e Rajmata believes that her son was ...vised but Pratap recalls that a ...earlier he had resisted attempts by ...f the Rajmata's men to "look over" ...ctor Hall. "I am a Rajput," avers the ...Pratap. "I belong to the Karauli royal ...e Rajasthan. When they threatened ...ook out my pistol and warned them ...go any further. When they asked me ...would do if the Rajmata herself tried ...n. I replied that I would shoot ..."

...ge Organisation: Vidya Bharati con... through state committees affiliated to ...ut of 1,300 schools and 50 colleges ...out the country. It aims at moving ...m "Macaulian" concepts of "alien" ...n. Says the editor of its journal, ...ngal Singh Thakur: "We want to ...e students Indian tradi...ture, philosophy, yoga, ...skrit."

...outer wing of the palace ...uses the Saraswati Shi...dir which the Rajmata ...soon after her link-up ...Jana Sangh in the late ...the time. Madhavrao, ...in the Jana Sangh till ...the Emergency was ...this decision. "Now," ...Rajmata, "we want to ...deal public school here, ...get the best students ...the Shishu Mandirs in ...will become some sort ...cleus for an alternative ...ional system."

...mpestuous as the rift has become, the ...of the trusts' take-over by the ...'s camp was almost resolved last ...at one of her extremely rare meetings ...oon, the Rajmata reportedly agreed ...Sushma and Shejwalkar and permit ...intment of two neutral trustees. In ...she asked for one of the keys to the ...strong-room containing the fabled ...jewels, both of which were with ...rao. Later, however, she changed ...d about dropping Sushma and ...ker. Today, neither she nor



Angre: eminence grise

Madhavrao can open the jewel strong-room—the two keys have to be used together.

The man who planned and executed both the Rajmata's entry into the Jana Sangh, and the formation of the Scindia trusts, was none other than Sardar Sambhaji Angre who lives with an impressive pipe collection, four dogs, his wife and daughter in a quaint mini-palace called Hiran Ban in one corner of the Jai Vilas grounds. Strangely enough, his son Tulaji has kept his distance from his father, and works quietly on a tea estate in Assam.

Sushma Devi and Dhyanendra: principal players

Palace Intrigues: Not that the elder Angre is acting out of tradition. The Angres accompanied Mahadaji Scindia when he established the Gwalior kingdom in 1761, and the family, which grew to be one of the most powerful of the Scindias' Sardars (ministers) has been at the centre of palace intrigues for generations.

Sambhaji Angre's father Chandroji tried to get the then Viceroy in 1936 to divest the young king Jiwaji Rao (Madhavrao's father) of his powers and set up a regency council. Chandroji was punished by having his *jagir* (estate) confiscated, and put on a pension.

Immediately after Jiwaji's death in 1960, say palace insiders, Chandroji introduced his son Sambhaji into the palace. By virtue of being a cousin by marriage of the late Maharaja, Sambhaji quickly gained the confidence of the Rajmata, but not without arousing jealousy and criticism. A delegation of Sardars even called on the Rajmata to warn her against Angre's influence.

Widening Gulf: The advice was ignored, and Angre gradually came to acquire influence over the Rajmata, advising her on every move. At the same time, the gulf between the Rajmata and Madhavrao was proportionately widening.

Although Angre is an invitee to the BJP's national executive, his spiritual mentor is a man called Omkarnath Thakur, who has a small ashram at Durgapuri, near Mehrauli in Delhi. Interestingly the Thakur has another powerful disciple—B.N. Mullik, who was director of Intelligence and once the most important policeman in the country. Angre and Mullik are reportedly good friends and *guru-bhais*.

When he is not shuttling between Bombay, Pune, Delhi, and Gwalior, where the Scindia trusts control extensive property, Angre looks after his personal property, which includes farmland in Guna district. His daughter Chitralekha is his closest aide; she also runs a bolt factory in Gwalior's industrial area.

Gwalior's Sardars also point out that Angre's wife Rajarajeshwari, too, is a Thakur. It so happens that Angre's brother-in-law is BJP Rajya Sabha MP Jaswant Singh, who is reported to be the party's biggest fund-raiser. Curiously, Rajarajeshwari has another important relative—her cousin Narendra Singh Bhati, one of Rajasthan's most powerful Congress(I) politicians and an associate of Rajiv Gandhi.

As Angre's role in two struggles—between the Rajmata and Madhavrao on the one hand, and between Indira and Maneka on the other—acquires larger dimensions with each passing day, this complex power play's two acts go on simultaneously, on parallel stage. Echoing through the tussles are the loud rattles set up by skeletons in the Scindia and Gandhi cupboards.

—CHAITANYA KALBAG in Gwalior

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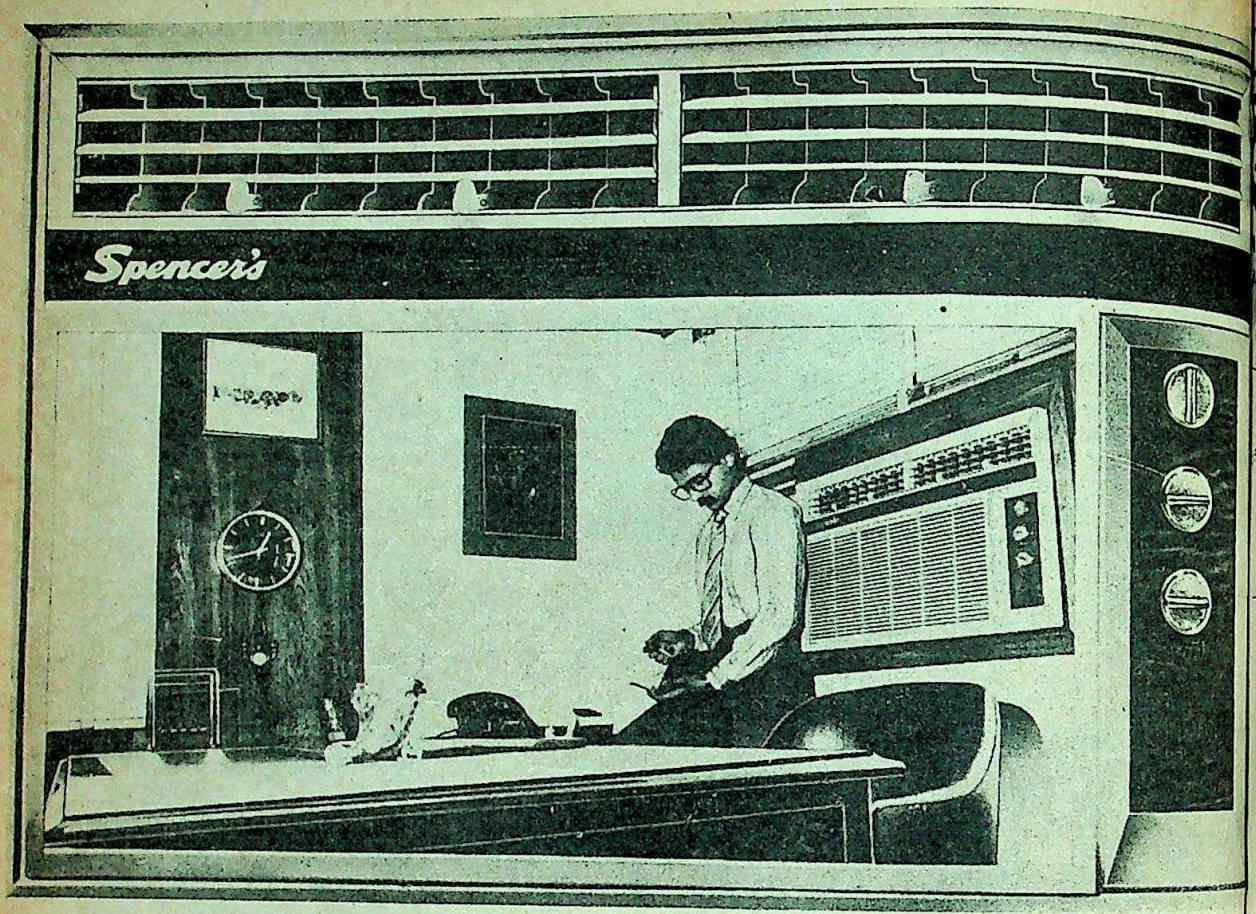

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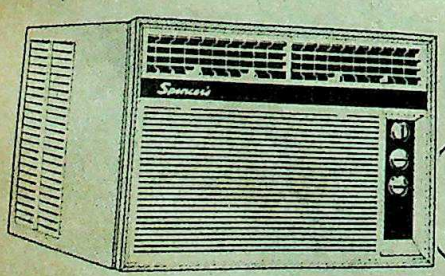

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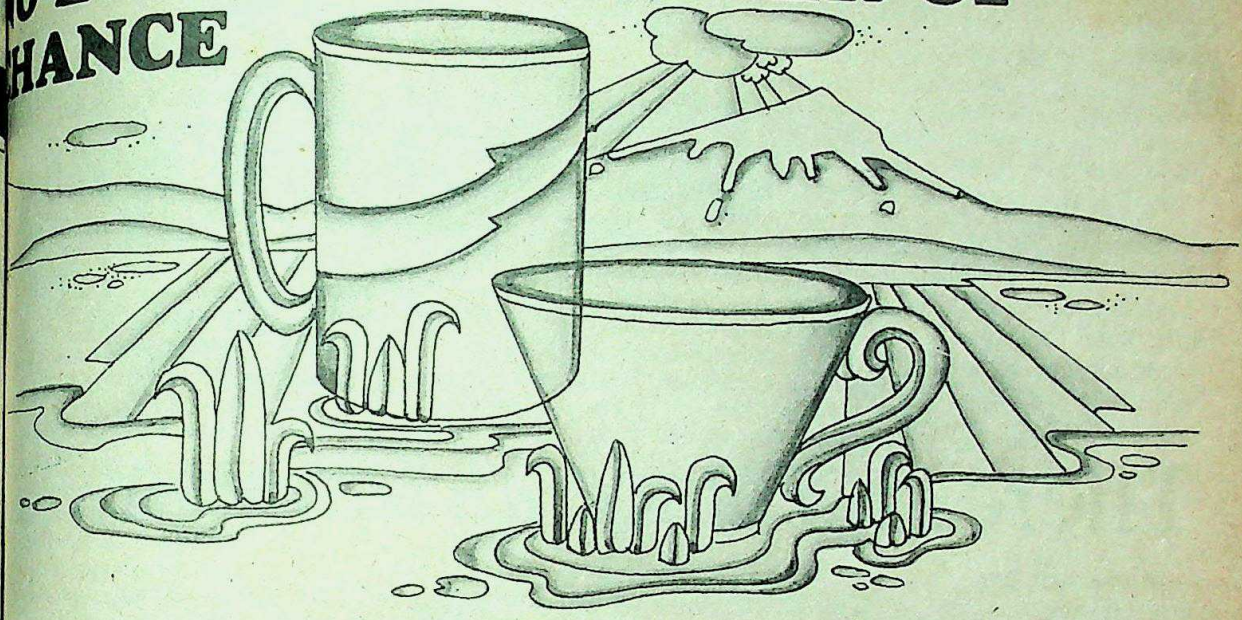

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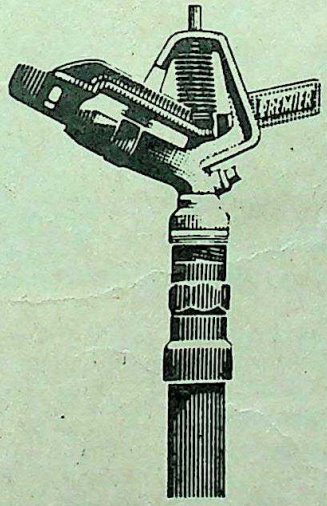

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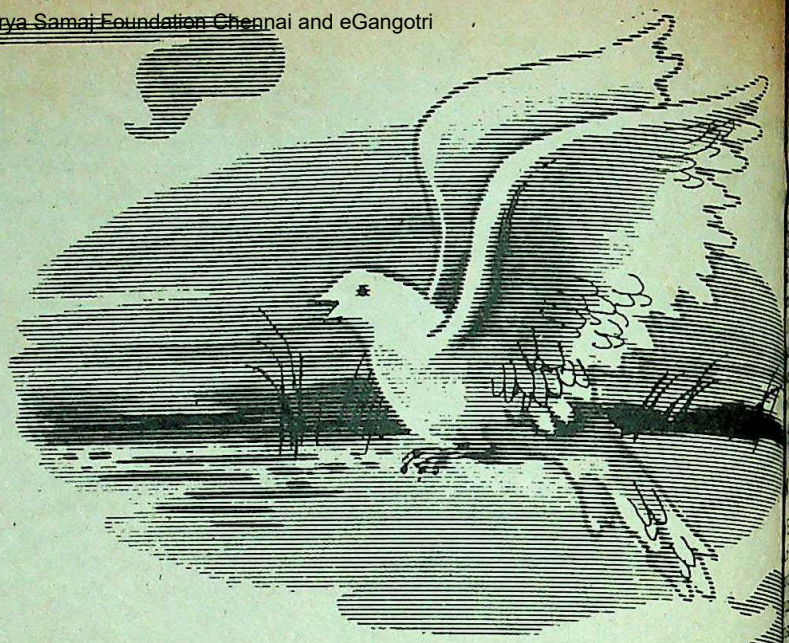

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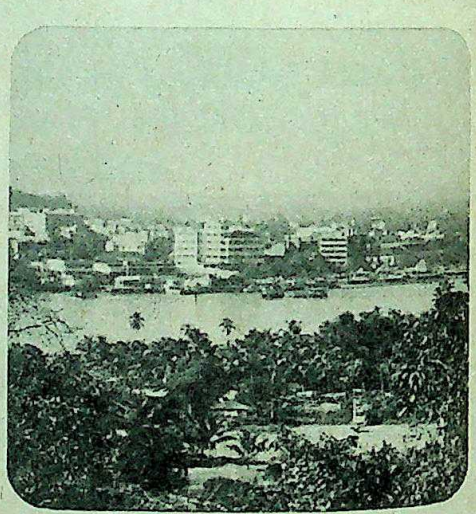

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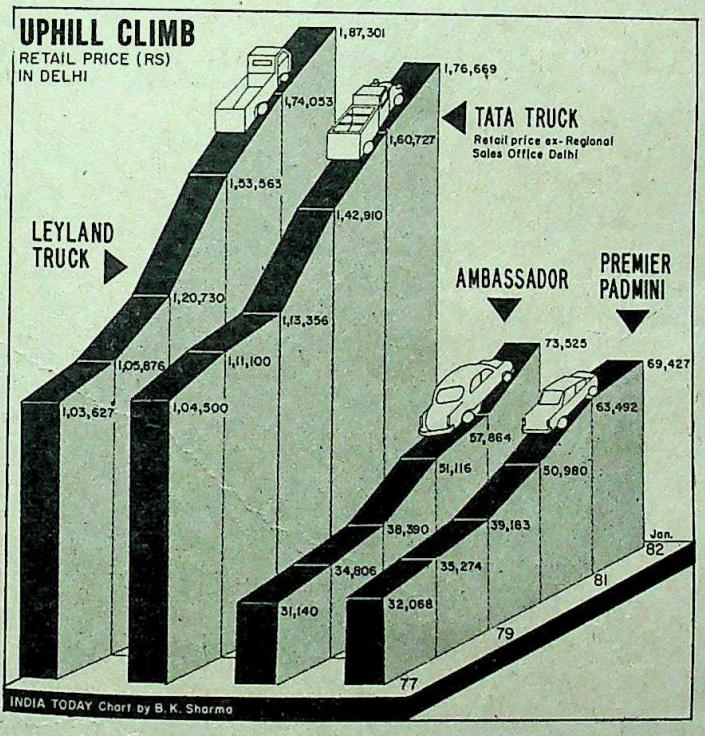
BATTLE OF THE BANK

FORMER deputy prime minister Y.B. Chavan and Congress(I) General Secretary Vasantdada Patil have been roped into a big bank take-over fight. The fight began last month when the Bank of Maharashtra, a nationalised bank, purchased enough shares of Sangli Bank, a small scheduled bank operating in Chavan's and Patil's home town. The bank has assets of over Rs 100 crore and working capital of Rs 125 crore. The deal was reportedly put through with the connivance of the Maharashtra government which owns the shares, but Sangli Bank has refused to register the shares in the name of the new owners and is planning to put up a stiff fight using its political clout if necessary.

THE FOLKS BACK HOME

REMITTANCES from Indians abroad amounted to as much as 20 per cent of the total export trade last year (1980–81), according to preliminary estimates. Ten years ago (1970–71) they accounted for less than 10 per cent—Rs 132 crore of remittances against export earnings of Rs 1,535 crore. In 1977–78 they crossed the Rs 1,000 crore for the first time but were still less than 20 per cent of exports. Since then there has been a rapid rise and the estimates for the figure at Rs 4,500 crore last year against exports of Rs 8,700 crore. Contrary to popular belief, the bulk of the remittances come not from the Gulf countries but from the United States, Britain, Malaysia and other non-Gulf countries, though the largest number of workers are from the Gulf countries.



BALLOONING COSTS

PRICES of motor cars have more than doubled in the last five years and by 50 per cent in the last two, according to the Finance Ministry. An Ambassador cost Rs 31,140 (retail ex-factory selling price) in 1977; today it costs Rs 73,525. Premier Padmini was available for Rs 34,806 in 1977; its current price is Rs 69,427. The price increase in the case of commercial vehicles has been less steep, from Rs 1,03,627 to Rs 1,87,301 in the case of Tata chassis to Rs 1,76,669, and from Rs 1,03,627 to Rs 1,87,301 in the case of Leyland truck chassis. The Bureau of Industrial Costs and Prices is looking into the matter but no respite is in sight.

TATAS ON THE FUTURE

TATAS LTD is shifting emphasis from marketing to manufacturing, starting with earth-moving equipment and an expanded production of air-conditioners. A less ambitious thrust is planned in solar energy equipment, while the creation of a new division, Tata International, heralds a major export effort. The company's new president, Ramesh Sarin (ex-ITC), has set the otherwise staid establishment buzzing, by bringing in recognised professionals to tackle the major problem areas (labour and marketing), and boosting morale by substantially hiking managerial perquisites. The foray into manufacturing comes after Sarin found that Voltas all too often helped establish a product on the market, only to subsequently lose the marketing contract. The latest instance is Amul's decision to handle its own marketing, thus hiving Rs 80 crore off Voltas' Rs 360 crore turnover.

SPURT IN SPONGE IRON

THE GOVERNMENT is trying several technologies for sponge iron production before settling down to one or two and has decided to go ahead with Lurgi of West Germany and Tata's locally developed technology. The Bihar Government and Modis have promoted a company to take up a sponge iron project in the state with a capacity of 1,50,000 tonnes a year and costing about Rs 35 crore. The Bihar Government is also keen to take up another project based on a process developed by Tata Steel.

The Orissa Government has already teamed up with Tatas for a similar project. Further away from the coal belt, the Steel Ministry is playing with the idea of a sponge iron plant based on Kudremukh iron ore. Mukand Iron and Steel has also staked its claim for a similar plant south of Bombay based on Bombay High gas as the reducing agent. Mafatlals announced in Bombay last month that they are also interested in a Bombay High-based plant, possibly in Ratnagiri. The Gujarat Government is also going ahead with a plan for a 2,50,000 tonnes a year plant in south Gujarat financed with Gulf money. However, none of the plants in the west has yet been cleared.

TIGHT CREDIT

WITH truck and tractor manufacturers deciding to cut back on production schedules by as much as 30 per cent, Industry Minister Narayan Dutt Tiwari made a personal appeal to Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee last fortnight to ease the rigours of the crunch. His pitch: this is, after all, productivity year, not anti-inflation year. Tiwari was goaded into action by reports that TELCO had decided to turn out just 2,000 trucks in April (against a monthly average of almost 4,000 last year), and that Ashok Leyland was similarly re-scheduling all production plans. The problem, according to the engineering industry, is not any drop in demand but the banks' refusal to extend credit: to fleet operators for buying trucks and to farmers for getting tractors.

PITCHING IN TO HELP

INDIA imports not only industrial experts and engineers from abroad but also apparently welders, fitters and similar skilled hands. The Bihar State Electricity Board will engage 23 welders, machinists, fitters and other skilled hands from the Soviet Union in the Patratu thermal power station. These hands will help Soviet experts already on site in advising the Board's engineers on improving plant performance. This is probably the first time foreign welders have been used on Indian jobs.

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INFLATION

Genie In The Bottle

A SPECTRE is haunting New Delhi—the spectre of inflation. Although government spokesmen claim that prices have been brought under control and the annual inflation rate is now very close to zero, its ghost has not yet been fully laid. A slight twist of fortune—a poor monsoon, for instance—and the genie in the bottle might again be uncorked and neutralise the only major plus point in favour of the Government.

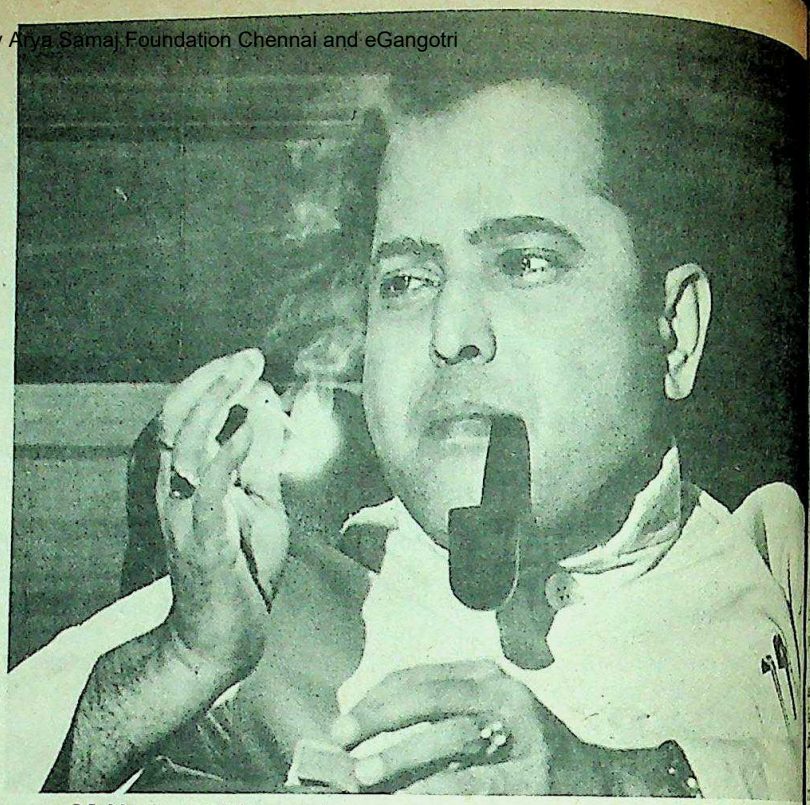
This explains why the Finance Ministry sticks to its tight monetary policy and is most reluctant to lift the lid on money supply, though it is under severe pressure from many powerful quarters to do so. The most vocal critic of the credit squeeze is the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) which has been arguing for the last two months that the squeeze is hurting industry badly and will not only affect industrial production in the short run but also vitiate the climate for investment. FICCI went so far as to say that the deficit financing of Rs 1,365 crore proposed in this year's budget was woefully inadequate and the economy was in such good form that it could easily absorb twice the deficit.

"I disagree completely with FICCI," Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee told INDIA TODAY last week. He also admitted that the Government's options were very limited (see Interview) and inflation always came first on his list of priorities. "I am not fully convinced that I have broken the back of inflation. In any case, we are taking steps to see that industry's genuine needs are being taken care of."

Industrial Performance: The minister has a point. It is true that the economy has picked up since 1979–80 and most indicators are pointing upwards. But there is nothing unusual about this. Industrial production always picks up after a good harvest, unless it is held back by infrastructural infirmities. Taking the last eight years, the good years were 1975–76, 1977–78 and 1980–81 when farm output went up by 15, 14 and 19 per cent respectively over the previous year. In the following years viz 1976–77, 1978–79 and 1981–82, industrial output reached near-record levels of 9.6, 7.6 and 8 per cent respectively. Industry in India is far more sensitive to agricultural performance than government policies. Liberalisation—of credit as well as licensing and other measures—might improve the performance marginally, but not if the farm sector is limping behind.

Another reason why the Government is not overly worried about the so-called credit crunch is its belief that industrial capacity in most sectors is fully stretched and unlikely to yield higher production, credit or no credit. The Government also suspects that, under these conditions, bank credit may be used for speculation rather than legitimate production activity. "What industry requires is not credit for working capital but finance for modernization and additions to production capacity," says an official from the Industry Ministry. "Most of our industrial plants are out of date and many are actually junks. Unless the industry goes in for massive modernization and technological updating, the 1980s may turn out to be years of stagnation, rather than take off," he says.

The Government also believes that the capital needs of industry—for modernization as well as expansion—may be more than industry can generate from its own resources. The finance minister admitted as much in his interview with INDIA TODAY. "We have enough resources for modest growth but not if we aim higher," he says. How high is higher? Over the last 15 years or so, the average rate of growth of gross national product (GNP) has been around 3.5 per cent and industrial growth rate about 5.5 per cent. There is also evidence that industrial growth rate is declining and the average



Mukherjee: striking a balance

PRANAB MUKHERJEE

Saving Socialis

LIKE President Roosevelt who said, tried to save capi from the capitalists. Minister Indira Gandhi is saving so from the socialists. In the last few m her government has softened the re industrial licensing, opened up th sector to big business houses and co with an import policy that has be scribed as the most liberal since pendence. The Government is also foreign investors including multina and going out of its way to hand ou industrial contracts to foreign firm

Are these just ad hoc *measu do not really add up to a policy or a deliberate shift to the 'right'? Ed Editor* JAY DUBASHI *spent over with Union Finance Minister Mukherjee in his elegantly panel in the Central Secretariat, North New Delhi last fortnight in an draw him out on some of the more aspects of the new economic Excerpts from the interview:*

Q. ***The Government is saying has cleared the mess left behind Janata and the economy has recov what way has it really recovered?***

A. GNP (gross national prod increased, industrial production h

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...and the rate of inflation—not prices—has come down. Take inflation. It was 22.2 per cent (over the previous year) on January 12, 1980, 14.8 per cent on January 10, 1981 and 7.2 per cent on January 2, 1982. After the presentation of the budget, it declined by 0.2 per cent.

Q. But people are saying that during the Janata period things were available in plenty and were cheap. Sugar was about Rs 3/4 a kg and the shops were full. Today in fact, wheat is not available on ration cards.

A. Sugar prices went up because of a big fall in production. This year the sugar position will improve and . . .

Q. Prices will come down?

A. Sugar-cane price was Rs 10 to Rs 12 per quintal in 1978. Today it is more than Rs 24. Naturally you cannot expect prices to come down.

Q. Although prices are more or less under control, industry is complaining that because of the credit squeeze, their production is affected.

A. I am not sure about that. Bank credit has expanded substantially, by 19 per cent over the last year. Bank credit up to December 1981 expanded by Rs 2,898 crore against Rs 1,362 crore last year. Still they are complaining, because production has improved. We have to restrict credit in order to contain inflation.

Q. Because of the IMF?

A. The IMF has nothing to do with it. We have been pursuing a selective credit policy for quite some time and it is adjusted according to requirements of the economy. I have assured them (industry) that genuine credit requirements will be met fully. The RBI will announce shortly the credit policy.

Q. But between inflation and tight money, do you really have much of a choice? You have been able to bring down inflation only because of the tight monetary policy.

A. Exactly. In an inflationary situation, we have to strike a balance at the right point. I would not like to liberalise credit too much for we are still not out of the woods. I cannot have a strait-jacket formula for the situation and would not like to create a situation where credit is deeper than savings.

Q. What about interest rates?

A. I am not going to touch them right now. I cannot go along with the industry demand as suggested by FICCI and others that we should do away with all restrictions.

Q. FICCI also suggested a much higher budget deficit.

A. I entirely disagree with them. After all, Indian industry is accustomed to some sort of sheltered market and they cannot expect they will go on having the advantage for all time to come. If inflation is not checked, it will harm industry as well as the public.

Q. Why are you so keen on foreign capital?

A. It is not that we are keen. We earmark areas—export sector and high technology-for foreign investment. Both these are crucial areas. Also, we should have investment from outside for updating our technology.

Q. Take Paradip steel plant. We could have imported technology and done everything else here. We have consultants who are supplying up-to-date steel technology to others. Why have we signed such a big contract with a foreign firm?

A. Because we do not have the money to build this plant. We simply do not have enough internal resources. If we must have steel and we do not have the money, we have to borrow. It is as simple as that. This is the first time in many years that we are going in for two major steel plants of 3 million tonne each, and we don't have that much money.

Q. What you are saying is that the economy is not generating enough resources for growth. Then why pump money into the public sector which is not adding to our resources, is actually wasting them.

A. Because most of our investment in the public sector is in infrastructure and the returns are low. The private sector is not interested in such investment anyway. But I will go with you that the public sector should yield better returns. But if you do not raise prices (of their products) their profits suffer, unless there are subsidies. You cannot expect a reasonable return if the economy is not allowed to operate in the normal course.

You must not think that only the private sector is efficient. Today I had to take over 103 textile mills. They were junk. Private management simply could not run them and they were just junk.

Q. This can work both ways. You are taking over inefficient private sector units in to the public sector. Is it not possible to hand over inefficient public sector units at least the management —to the private sector?

A. No. Because there is not that much efficiency in the private sector.

Q. Since we are borrowing so heavily outside, how will it affect our balance of payments?

A. We are generating capital but it's not enough. In 1979–80, total capital raised by private companies was Rs 72 crore and in 1981–82 it is crossing Rs 400 crore. But if I require Rs 600 crore, there is a gap. If I want to add 2 million megawatt of power, I don't have the money. But if I want to add 2,000 megawatt, that I can do with my own capital.

There is also one more point. We are not premitting borrowings from abroad unless they are specifically tied up with a project, so that we are in a position to pay the money back.

Q. Since we are borrowing capital and technology freely, won't this help the multinationals? And because of this there is a feeling that you are going 'right', politically speaking.

A. Look, we are permitting multinationals to come in only in selected areas. We are not allowing them to set up a textile mill here.

Q. What about Coca-Cola?

A. No question. Yes, they can come in if they want to export 100 per cent. But not for domestic consumption.

Q. What is the Government's basic thinking behind liberalisation of controls? Are you doing so because things are getting so complex that they cannot be managed?

A. It is not a question of management. In the initial stages, it was necessary to protect indigenous industries. When you have a small plant, you have to fence it from four sides. But when it grows strong, it does not require fencing. Today the Indian industry has gained over the stage of infancy and it has got some strength. So we utilise the import window to protect as well as discipline it. If a couple of companies hold a monopoly of a certain commodity, we have to warn them that if they go beyond a point, we shall import

Q. Why is it that we are not growing as fast as, say, Japan? What is it that is keeping us back?

A. Our system is different. It also depends on national ethos and the complexity of the problem. I am giving you just one example. If we go in a big way for modernization of the textile industry, we can make textiles much cheaper. But what will be the fate of the 10 million handloom weavers? And each loom in the organised sector displaces five handloom weavers. You can make cloth cheaper—and textile companies more profitable—but a large number of poor people will die of starvation. It is not easy to tackle the problem of 683 million people when there are so many competing demands. This is not necessary in a more or less free economy or a controlled economy. Ours is a mixed economy—partly controlled, partly free.

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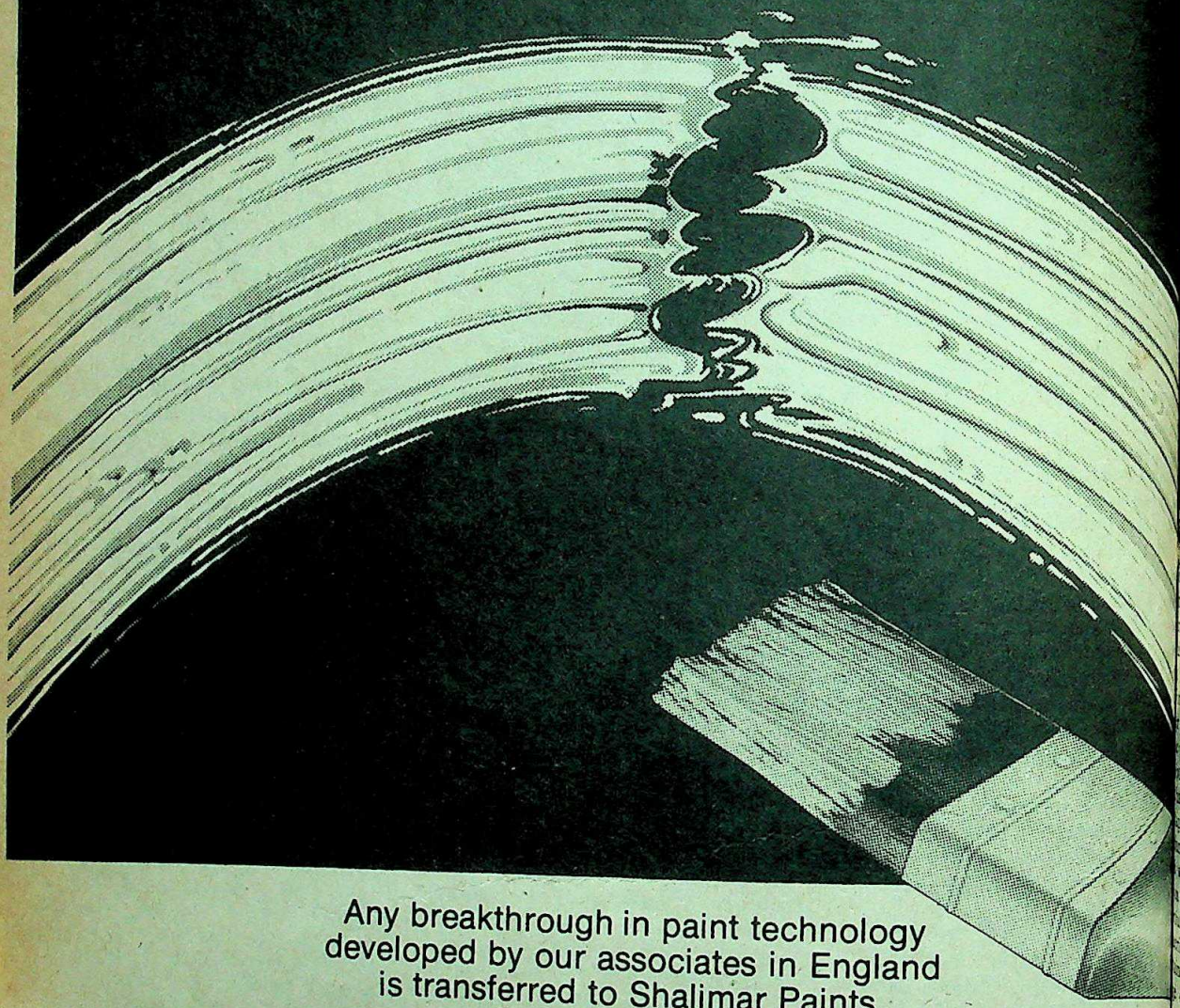
What the British start... we finish.



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...the last eight years has been around ...only. We are apparently able to ...these growth rates without straining ...resources and within the existing ...of capital and technology. But ...higher than these rates—say 5 per ...and 8 per cent of industrial ...into problems of all kinds, ...balance of payments and inflation.

...Government has apparently de...to cross this barrier by going in ...wholesale borrowing abroad, first ...International Monetary Fund (IMF) ...private lenders. The IMF loan ...country a respite—but only for the ...years. The ...rowings are ...more serious ...It is not clear ...the Govern...being pushed ...s going for ...own volition. ...strategy—on ...the finance ...was not very ...ming—has ...been for...Delhi fol...cuts in US ...Bank aid. ...hi is now ...over key ...projects to foreign firms on ...terms that they can arrange with ...of their banks and govern...

...n companies, aided and abetted ...governments, are keen to come in ...recession in their own countries. It ...for instance, if Davy McKee ...been so anxious to come in with ...worth about Rs 3,000 crore for a ...at Paradip if the steel industry in ...was not passing through a crisis. ...on the heels of Davy McKee comes a ...headed by Northern ...Industry and General Electric ...with an offer of a Rs 1,800-crore ...deal for a super thermal power ...at Singrauli.

...cting Problems: Actually, neither ...nor thermal power stations ...call for assistance from outside. ...excellent consultants and con... of world renown in these ...M.N. Dastur & Co, who are advising ...plants in Latin America and North ...and Bharat Heavy Electricals ...(BHEL), a public sector concern, ...considered among the top 10 heavy ...firms in the world. Thus, tech... ...hardly a problem. The problem, if ...finance—of converting technology ...and skilled manpower into capital.

This is a technical problem which our monetary economists and finance specialists should be able to tackle. In any case, the bulk of the necessary resources can be raised locally if the public sector undertakings which now waste resources on a grand scale can be put in order. But the Government has not been able to overcome its ideological prejudice in favour of the public sector and prefers to borrow abroad rather than tell the public sector to get cracking and begin delivering. Since foreign lenders are only too keen to oblige, New Delhi is once again choosing the easy way out.

Loan Repayments: And how will the country pay back the vast foreign loans it is accumulating? Very few of the new projects will help directly in exports. The Indian market has such a tremendous appetite for consumption that a slight increase in per capita incomes—no more than 1 or 2 per cent a year—leads to a virtual stampede for consumption. The country is short of power, petroleum, cement, coal and sugar, even at skyrocketing prices. It is unlikely that such an economy can be held down to produce surpluses for massive exports, required to service the foreign loans.

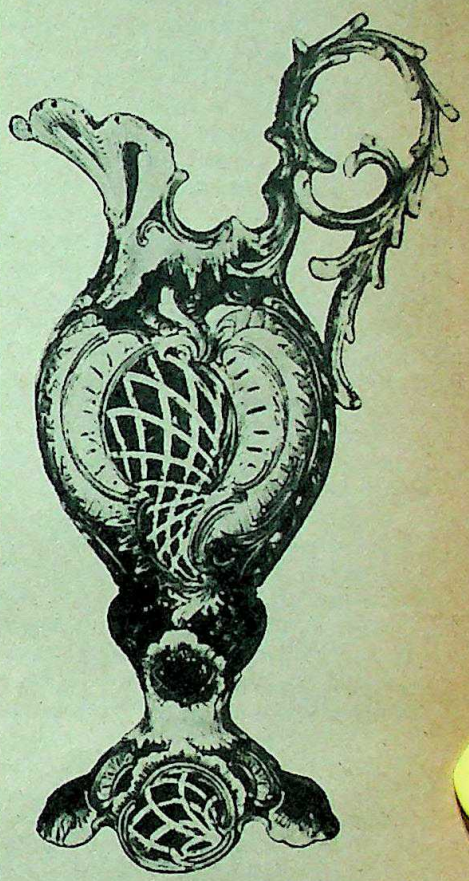
The Government prefers to borrow abroad rather than tell the public sector to get cracking and begin delivering.

The balance of trade has been adverse since 1977–78 and the gap is increasing so rapidly that next year it may be 10 times what it was five years ago. Last year (1981–82) the country is estimated to have run into a negative trade balance to the tune of Rs 5,700 crore which is equal to our entire exports in 1978–79, barely three years ago. The only thing that has helped in keeping our heads above the swirling waters are the remittances from abroad which are reported to have reached a level of Rs 4,500 crore last year, about two-thirds of total exports. With the oil countries cutting down on construction projects and oil prices tumbling by the week, this volume of remittances might also take a dip and possibly disappear altogether in a few years' time.

It is not clear whether this frightful scenario is at all seen through the Finance Ministry's rosy crystal ball. Mukherjee says that he is an incorrigible optimist, which is perhaps one reason why he has survived all these years. But hope is one thing, and reality another, and it is time North Block ordered a new crystal ball that tells one from the other.

—JAY DUBASHI

Next time you visit Bangalore, take home something more than memories.



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MARUTI

Step Aside For Suzuki

THE final chapter is about to be written in the most chequered history of any car project in the world. The board of Maruti Udyog Ltd met in New Delhi at the end of last month to approve a collaboration with Suzuki Motor Company of Japan, the 16-year search for a people's car had ended.

The board's decision put an end to almost 18 months of seemingly interminable parleys with virtually every major car producer in the world (INDIA TODAY, January 31). But the final choice of Suzuki's two-year-old SS80F model was almost self-evident. The 796 cc car was not only the only proven vehicle on offer in the desired range, it was also by far the cheapest car available, on far and away the best terms.

In India, if import duties are eased, as Maruti officials hope, the buyer will have to pay something less than Rs 45,000, and will at that price get a car that gives 18 to 20 km to the litre in Japanese driving conditions. The car may need to be serviced no more than once a year and other maintenance costs are expected to be minimal. The average Indian user, who drives 10,000 km a year, can therefore expect to run the Suzuki for Rs 400 a month, less than half what it takes now to maintain an Ambassador or a Premier.

Competing Projects: Rival car manufacturers claimed to be unconcerned by the threatened competition, but have nevertheless been rushing through with plans to replace their own quarter-century-old models. Hindustan Motors, maker of the Ambassador, is already well into a project to house its car in a new Vauxhall body, and hopes to put the new version on the road at least six months before Maruti's December 1983 deadline. A new engine being designed by British Leyland will be incorporated later. Premier Automobiles in Bombay, maker of the Premier Padmini, is trying to debug its own project for making the Fiat 124D at a plant near Kalyan, north of Bombay. In Bangalore, yet another new car, the fibreglass Dolphin of British parentage, is getting ready to be launched by Sunrise Auto Industries (maker of the three-wheeler car Badal).

The excitement isn't restricted to cars. Other Japanese automobile manufacturers are getting ready for a virtual take-over of India's automobile industry. Delhi Cloth Mills (DCM) is expected to announce a tie-up with Toyota Motor Company for a new line of trucks (light commercial vehicles, in industry jargon). Eicher Goodearth hopes to strike a deal soon with Mitsubishi, again for light trucks, and Punjab Tractors was talking to Hitachi-Daihatsu. A fourth company, Hyderabad Allwyn, has already struck a deal with Nissan Motor Company, but this has yet to earn the approval of the Government. Nevertheless, the Japanese have virtually swept the country's automobile sweepstakes.

"This is nothing surprising," said Vinay Bharat Ram, executive director of DCM, "I think it is obvious that in automobiles, as in other fields like electronics, the technology is now all in Japan. Europe and America don't stand a chance." H.D.S. Malhotra, chief executive of Eicher Goodearth, added: "The Europeans simply cannot compete in the same price range as the Japanese. The cheapest collaboration offer that we got from Europe was 50 per cent more than the comparable Japanese offer."

Commercial Vehicles: Maruti's proposed tie-up with Suzuki is not for cars alone. The basic engine, transmission and chassis will be used for other commercial vehicles: a pick-up van, a micro-bus that can serve as a taxi, and at a later stage a four-wheel-drive patrol car for use by the army and police. Said R.C. Bhargava of Maruti Udyog Ltd; "This choice of options is crucial, because it permits mass production of the basic components (1.4 lakh annually). Without mass production, we would not be able to reduce costs and offer a car at Rs 45,000."

The prospect of a cheap car opens up vistas of a whole new market for cars where none now exists. As Bhargava puts it, "Over the last eight years, the individual c... has virtually disappeared from the scene. Most cars today are bought... Government and companies. But... 45,000 or less for a new car that costs... run, we aim to start the motoris... India."

If price and the low maintena... running costs are the key factors, it i... incredible that for a full year after M... take-over in October 1980, no one co... with Maruti had even thought in te... small car. With breath-taking foolha... the initial search had been for a m... sized car which could on no accou... cost less than Rs 1 lakh. No surveys h... carried out to find out whether a ... existed at all at that price.

Export Hoax: The much-talked... export commitment, now relegated t... rity but so important a part of the... negotiations, was an even bigger ho... the favoured Renault offer to bu... 50,000 cars annually was at a price wh... in fact lower than the cost of the comp... which Renault would supply. Rather... the negotiations, Renault officials had... blandly that if India wanted to export... should naturally be prepared to s... them. As a Maruti official said: "Thi... quite simply that every second car ... exported would be going out free.

Such a deal nearly went through... Maruti changed gear rather ... after Narayan Dutt Tiwari ... Charanjit Chanana at the helm... Industry Ministry last July. Till that... year after the Maruti take-over, no o... country had taken even a casual lo...

The Suzuki range (from left to right): micro-bus, the 800 c.c. saloon; pick-up van and p... the Japanese are coming.... hopefully.

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automobile industry. That had to October 1981, and the first visit to Maruti officials was in November. ki, in fact, was not an official as recently as February, when a from them reached the Maruti Three days after that, two Suzuki were in Delhi for the first talks. the last entrant in the race, Suzuki among all Japanese companies detailed offer. Maruti Managing V. Krishnamurty and Bhargava for two weeks in March and, week of their return on the 20th, the to take its final decision. Quite to Aesop's fable, the hare had tortoise.

final analysis, the choice was ingly simple. Once the decision to for a small car was taken, the rival almost automatically eliminated. and European bids from Renault, and Volkswagen were ruled out as ensive (at least 65 per cent more uki's offer). Ford Australia couldn't all car at all, and British Leyland's Austin Mini was unsuitable car was a two-door model. The ese bids from Mitsubishi and re for cars in the 650–665 cc range, to develop the power needed for city driving and easy overtaking. final decision of the Maruti board ever, full of delicious ironies. had been floated in the chimerical India's first completely indigenous ere was the acceptance of a wholly ehicle. The company had been a man violently opposed to the of public sector industry. Yet Gyog Ltd was very much a public pany. Most piquant of all, present meeting on March 25 was one of rs, Congress(I) MP Arun Nehru, ere was fighting a bitter political battle with the widow of the company's founder, the late Sanjay Gandhi.

Brave Face: While Maruti officials were busy last fortnight tying up details with Suzuki directors in Delhi, the existing car manufacturers were putting up a brave face threatened competition. Said Jyotindra Vakil, senior deputy general manager of Premier Automobiles: "As we see it, the Maruti market is going to be different. Theirs is a smaller range of cars, which rules out direct competition. In any case, ours is the most popular car in the country with a waiting list of up to 10 years in some places." Hindustan Motors officials similarly argued that their product would still retain its hold on the office car market: senior officials everywhere want to travel in a roomier car.

Some time next year, the Uttarpara factory of Hindustan Motors will start rolling out a car with a Vauxhall body and later a British Leyland engine as well. Yet unnamed, the new car, according to company sources, will like the Ambassador continue to seat five, though it will be lower and more streamlined. It is expected to make around 13 km to the litre against 10.5 km made by the Ambassador. The cost will be around Rs 80,000. For the new car the company has an outlay of around Rs 28.5 crore.

Both companies were pushing their new projects as hard as possible. But Premier's project was more or less stuck because the urban land ceiling law had held up the acquisition of land near Kalyan for setting up a new Rs 30-crore plant that would turn out the Seat 124D (a successful Fiat model being phased out by its Spanish subsidiary, Seat) using a modified version of the present 1,089 cc Premier engine. Premier does not expect the new cars to be available before 1985.

In all the excitement over a range of new cars, almost nobody was asking the old questions about a poor country investing over Rs 200 crore in Maruti, an estimated Rs 60 crore in two other car plants and perhaps a further Rs 200 crore in new ancillary units that would make car components. "In anything other than today's political climate," commented one observer, "putting Rs 500 crore into cars when there is no money for trains or buses, and for power plants and the basic social services, would have been considered an unmitigated scandal."

Maruti officials were ready with such refutations as they could muster. "At even 16 km to the litre," argues Bhargava, "the half a million additional cars that Maruti will produce by 1995 will drink only 0.3 million tonnes of petrol, less than 1 per cent of India's oil consumption. And the foreign exchange spent directly on each Suzuki car will be recovered through fuel savings by that car in just three years." Bhargava also emphasises the tremendous employment potential of a resurgent automobile industry: "Everywhere in the world, the car industry has created vast numbers of jobs, not in the car plants themselves, but in associated ancillary units and servicing, maintenance and other related operations."

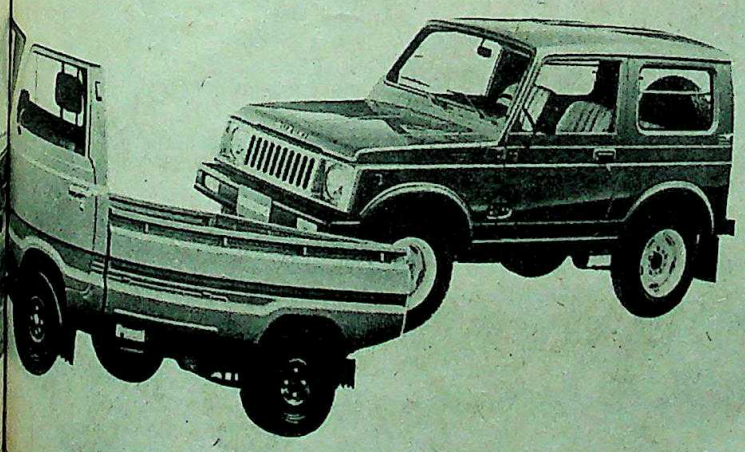
Clearances Needed: Many hurdles still lie ahead of Maruti. A project report has to be prepared after the detailed negotiations with Suzuki, and then major clearances obtained from the Government for the investment programme and the foreign collaboration. Finally, the Cabinet's seal of approval has to be obtained. The first car will roll out 18 months after the final clearance, Maruti officials say.

There is one other major stumbling block: tax policy. The initial cars will have an import content of close to 90 per cent, and customs duty on these components is now no less than 143 per cent. If this is not reduced to 25 per cent, as Maruti officials hope, there is no way in which the company can hope to turn out a car for less than Rs 70,000.

The other companies have as much of a stake in getting the reduction in customs duty. All the new truck ventures too will fail to get off the ground if the duty is not slashed. Malhotra of Eicher says that if the Government wants any of the new units to survive, duty will have to be reduced for a clearly identified period of four or five years, until the indigenisation process is complete.

In the public mind, however, these were remote considerations forgotten in the general excitement over the prospect of a cheap modern car being available for the first time in 20 years. As Vivek Bharat Ram of DCM said: "Twenty years ago, I could say with pride that India produced cars. Today I am ashamed to speak of the subject. In two years' time, I hope that will change."

—T.N. NINAN with Bureau Reports



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CIGARETTES

Brand Wars

THE ROADSIDE hoardings tell the whole story, asking you to smoke *A-1, Royal Pipers, Personal Preference* and every other kind of preference. These and other new brands signal a major assault by the lesser cigarette companies on a market dominated by ITC Ltd.

ITC has so far been sitting pretty, controlling almost half the market for over 90 billion cigarettes annually. And while every other cigarette company has relied heavily on one or at most two successful brands, ITC alone has reached every kind of cigarette smoker with a range of brands counted by the dozen.

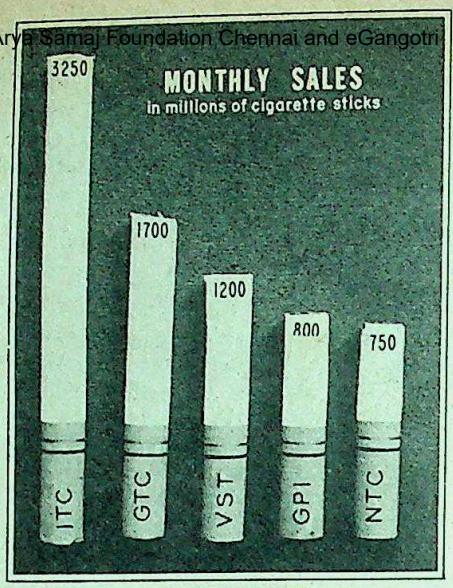
The new brands war which has been gathering strength in the last month threatens to change all that, with the rival companies both broadening their range and moving to the more expensive, and more profitable, upper reaches of the market. "We intend to stay ahead," says S.K. Mehta, chairman of ITC's tobacco division. But other company spokesmen frankly admit that the new offensive will almost certainly make a dent in ITC's market share.

Thus, Golden Tobacco, which has till now relied heavily on its best-selling *Panama*, has introduced no fewer than three new brands: *A-1, Royal Pipers* and *Chancellor*. National Tobacco (*Regent* and *No 10*) has just introduced *Personal Preference*, after establishing a market last year for its high-priced *Duncans 100s*. And Vazir Sultan, worried at a 12 per cent fall in *Charminar* sales to 1,050 million per month has put out a new *Charminar Virginia*. Yet other new brands are due to be launched shortly to fight for market segments now dominated by ITC.

Heavy Competition: If the brand war signifies a resolve by the other companies to play the game by the ITC's rule book, they are also going one step further by expanding capacity, and clearly taking the battle to ITC's doorstep.

Golden Tobacco plans to set up a new unit in Assam, using a licence acquired by the Assam State Industries Development Corporation. This is on top of another unit set up last year in Sikkim, a tax-less haven particularly attractive to an industry burdened with an average 250 per cent tax level.

At the same time, Godfrey Phillips, acquired recently by the fast expanding Modi group, has a stake in a new unit expected to come up near Delhi, in the New Okhla Industrial Development Area (NOIDA). And yet another unit is likely to come up in Madhya Pradesh, with as yet unknown parentage.



For an industry that has witnessed an average annual growth rate of barely 2 per cent, this kind of investment reflects big thinking, and is a result in part of the injection of new blood into the industry. Apart from the Modis' acquisition of Godfrey Phillips, other cigarette companies too have changed hands in recent years: first the Duncan Goenkas acquired National Tobacco, then the Dalmias bought up Golden Tobacco.

National Tobacco is now believed to be planning an industry coup by tying up with Rothmans of England. And the Modis are said to be planning to introduce new brands belonging to Godfrey Phillips' former parent company, Phillip Morris.

Sales Growth: Says an industry spokesman: "This new competitive spurt may in part be the result of a feeling that the cigarette market can now grow faster. Last year, for the first time in many years, the budget contained no new taxes on cigarettes, and sales grew by 6 per cent. This year, the budget does have an unpleasant new tax on cigarette packing, but I think the Government realises that this industry has been taxed to saturation."

Competition, however, is not new to the industry, and has often taken on quite unhealthy overtones. Companies have been known to spread rumours about rival products: "X brand causes TB", and "Y brand will easily give you cancer". Poster wars have been launched. And pamphlets and booklets alleging unethical marketing practices have found their way into journalists' hands, an obvious attempt to influence media articles. Even today, charges are freely aired about kickbacks through wholesale agents, with one estimate suggesting that the Rs 850 crore industry generates black money worth no less than Rs 100 crore.

On another plane, the battle has often been over brand names. When, in February 1980, National Tobacco introduced *Tabac* (in the magic price category for a packet of 10), ITC promptly in a *Tabac Filter*. In the resulting mar fusion, both brands duly flopped.

Substitute Posters: Later, National Tobacco launched *Cig* wi ter depicting a lion smoking a cigare soon appeared a substitute poster sh cigarette-smoking donkey.

And barely a few months ag Golden Tobacco launched its *A-1* (again in the magic price category). Phillips took NTC to court on the cha the *A-1* resembled "lambda", the 11 in the Greek alphabet, which th already registered as a brand name.

Through all this rough and tum still controls close to half the cigare ket, followed by Golden Tobacco Sultan, Godfrey Phillips and N Tobacco.

In response to the latest challe has tried to bag an entirely new corne market, the health-conscious smo introducing India's first mild cigarett *Lights*). In a parallel effort to pres hold on the upper end of the mar company has introduced a variation existing *Classic* brand, *Classic Intens* It is also thinking of moving to Sik exploit that state's tax haven status.

And an ITC spokesman said: "We our confidence in our brand name quality and our marketing strength next few months will show whether confidence is justified or misplaced."

—ASOK

THE MARKETS

Rosy Future

AFTER last month's shake-o shares are back to the form, apparently not worse for the flare-up between the b the bears which almost knocked the off the market. But you can't real good thing down and though some are still a little off-colour, it is only of time before normalcy is fully Corporate results have been pretty number of companies reporting rec tax profits and ambitious pr diversification.

The rash of bonus issues has also the sentiment. Baroda Rayon an Electronics have come out with bon and the bonus issue of Colgate-Pa which had been kept waiting for so has at last been cleared. At least companies are expected to come bonus issues in the next few weeks, last two years have been exceptiona

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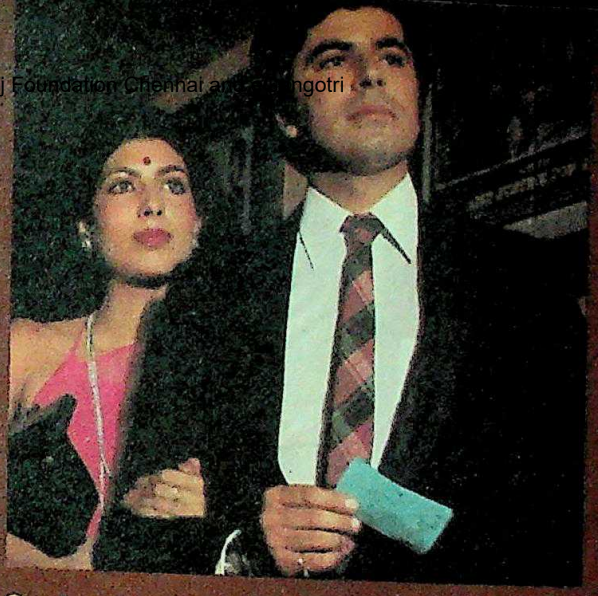
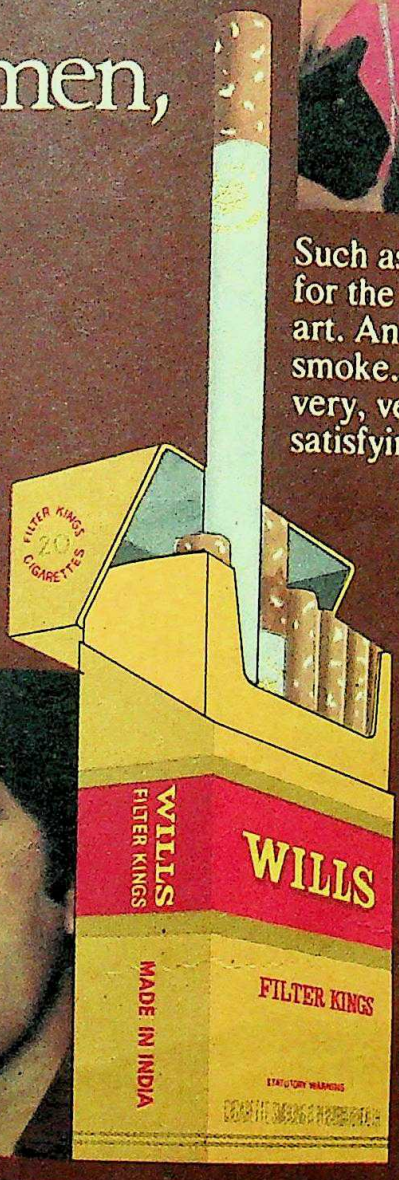
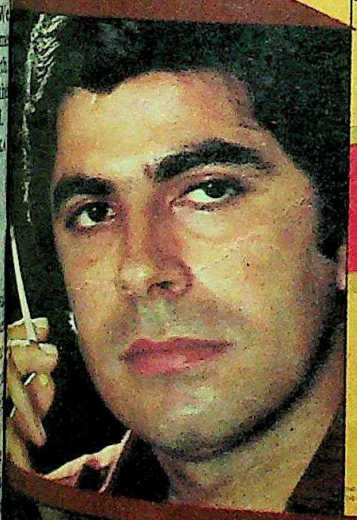
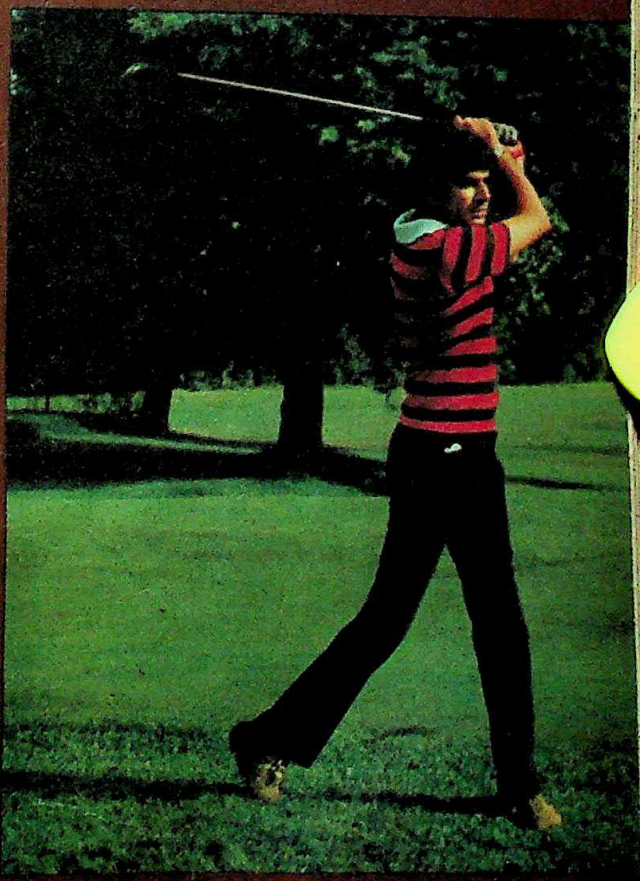


Such as getting first night tickets. Getting par for the course in golf. Getting a rare piece of art. And getting the experience of a truly great smoke. Wills Filter Kings. Rich, mellow—and very, very smooth. For some men, it's most satisfying.

For some men, things always go smoothly.







Wills Filter Kings
Wills excellence.
In kingsize.

CIGARETTE SMOKING IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH

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ACTIVE STOCKS

	Close 1.4.82	Change on Fortnight
Low		
50 Ambalal Sarabhai	15.00	0.50
50 Ashok Leyland	49.50	1.50
50 Associated Cement	311.00	−4.00
50 Atlas Copco	62.50	6.50
00 Bajaj Auto	1375.00	−50.00
00 Ballarpur	41.50	nil
00 Baroda Rayon	411.00	59.00
00 Bharat Gears	36.00	0.50
00 Birla Jute	30.20	−1.30
00 Blow Plast	58.50	3.50
50 Bombay Dyeing	71.00	1.00
00 Brooke Bond	21.80	−0.90
00 Calcutta Electric	16.50	0.40
00 Century Spinning	956.00	46.00
00 Chemicals & Fibres	22.60	−0.10
00 Colgate	144.00	9.00
25 Crescent Dyes	13.70	−0.30
50 Delhi Cloth Mills	35.56	1.06
00 Dunlop	20.40	1.40
50 East India Hotels	18.25	−0.37
00 Elcon	35.00	2.00
50 Escorts	44.00	1.50
75 Food Specialities	40.00	nil
00 Garware Nylon	43.00	−1.75
00 General Electric	26.25	−0.25
00 Guest Keen Williams	32.80	0.60
00 Gujarat Fertilisers	406.00	38.00
00 Hindustan Aluminium	45.60	2.60
00 Hindustan Lever	53.00	3.00
00 Hindustan Motors	27.24	1.54
00 Hoechst Dyes	26.50	−0.50
50 Indian Aluminium	19.60	−0.40
50 Indian Cable	19.50	−2.00
00 Indian Dyestuff	210.00	10.00
00 Indian Explosives	23.60	1.10
00 Indian Hotels	61.00	−6.00
00 Indian Organic	29.00	−1.00
00 Indian Oxygen	34.25	0.25
00 Ingersoll Rand	132.00	7.00
50 Ion Exchange	33.00	3.50
65 ITC	23.20	0.10
50 Jayshree Tea	33.00	1.70
50 J K Synthetics	65.20	5.70
00 Kesoram	52.20	0.60
00 Kinetic Engineering	130.00	15.00
00 Kothari (Madras)	25.25	0.25
00 Larsen & Toubro	54.00	3.00
25 Madura Coats	15.30	−0.95
00 Mahindra & Mahindra	49.00	2.00
00 Metal Box	13.60	0.50
00 Mukand Iron	26.50	0.50
00 National Organic	197.00	9.00
50 Nirlon	37.00	1.50
50 Orient Paper	40.90	1.40
50 Peico Electronics	27.80	−0.4
50 Ponds India	74.00	0.50
00 Premier Auto	325.00	12.00
50 Ranbaxy	27.00	2.00
50 Raymond	58.25	3.25
00 Reliance	136.00	11.00
50 Shaw Wallace	27.00	0.50
50 Shriram Fibres	47.44	3.19
00 SPIC	14.75	0.75
50 Tata Chemicals	49.00	2.00
00 Tata Steel	351.00	30.00
50 Telco	480.00	40.00
00 Texmaco	51.25	0.75
00 Union Carbide	25.25	−0.75
50 Usha Martin Black	28.00	−1.30
00 Voltas	234.00	−4.00
50 Zuari Agro	21.10	0.90

and reserves are bursting at the seams.

The Government seems to have decided to release its tight grip on the prices of industrial commodities, beginning with cement. The authorities have now decided to follow up with the abolition of the system of administered prices for pig iron and all categories of steel products from integrated steel plants. A similar policy might also be announced for fertilisers. There are also rumours that some kind of dual price policy might be introduced in regard to aluminium. Since aluminium and fertiliser companies have not been doing too well lately, they are worth watching.

The textile strike in Bombay does not seem to have made much of a difference so far but it might if it continues any longer. The strike has curbed pressure on credit but this can only be temporary and, unless the Government relents, the credit crunch may begin to bite into share prices. Reports of substantial purchases by institutional investors like Life Insurance Corporation and Unit Trust have also helped but this can work both ways.

Cushioned: The fact that the textile strike has not affected market buoyancy is an indication that diversification is beginning to pay. During the shake-out of March 18, Century Spinning suffered the most but it has also been the first to bounce back. The company is expected to benefit from the new cement pricing and distribution policy as its cement plants have already gone into production. Diversification has also helped companies like Baroda Rayon—which is also going in for a cement plant—and Escorts, which proposes taking up an entirely new line, dry docking.

A group which is also diversifying but has somehow escaped attention is Modis who are now going into chemicals and steel in a big way. They are tying up with a state government for a sponge iron plant based on imported know-how and also planning a Rs 150-crore synthetic fibre plant in Maharashtra. Sponge iron is apparently the latest craze, with everyone from Modis to Mafatlals pitching in. This is not, however, strictly speaking, diversification, as the projects will be undertaken by separate companies. Tata Chemical's diversification in fertilisers is of the same nature as a new company is being formed for the project.

The only fly in the ointment is the credit crunch but this can only be temporary. The Government is obviously waiting for some good news on the food front, which means another three months or so, and the temporary slack can always be made up later. The most important thing is the morale at the board level which, considering the numerous annual reports streaming out of the boardrooms, seems reasonably bullish.

WORLD VALUE OF RUPEE

Country	Currency Unit		TT Selling Rates (Rs)	TT Buying Rates (Rs)
Australia	As $	1	9.9626	9.8632
Austria	As Sch	100	56.0824	55.4858
Bahrain	Dinar	1	24.9534	24.7707
Bangladesh	Taka	100	43.7254	43.4052
Canada	Can $	1	7.7314	7.6517
Egypt	Egp £	1	11.3302	11.2472
France	Fr Frc	1	1.5137	1.4978
Hong Kong	Hk $	1	1.6263	1.6100
Indonesia	Rupiah	100	1.4538	1.4431
Iran	Rial	100	11.3763	11.2930
Italy	It Lira	100	0.7132	0.7059
Japan	Jap Yen	100	3.8335	3.7883
Kenya	K Shilling	1	0.8802	0.8738
Kuwait	Dinar	1	32.8798	32.6390
Malaysia	Ml $	1	4.0565	4.0127
Mauritius	Rupee	1	0.8757	0.8692
Nepal	Rupee	1	0.7136	0.7083
Netherlands	D Glds	1	3.5496	3.5122
Pakistan	Rupee	1	0.8538	0.8476
Singapore	Sing $	1	4.4479	4.3993
Spain	Sp Pt	100	8.7946	8.7170
Sri Lanka	Rupee	1	0.4569	0.4536
Sweden	Sw Kr	1	1.5991	1.5821
Switzerland	Sw Frc	1	4.8240	4.7738
Tanzania	T Sch	1	1.0102	1.0028
Thailand	Baht	100	40.9748	40.6074
UK	Pound	1	16.5948	16.4460
USA	US $	1	9.4800	9.3500
UAE	Dihram	1	2.5601	2.5414
USSR	Rouble	1	12.8990	12.8045
W. Germany	DM	1	3.9324	3.8902

These rates were supplied by The Bank of Tokyo, Ltd., New Delhi and quoted between the Banks on April 7, 1982.

ECONOMIC TRENDS

	Latest	Change on month
PRICES		
ET Commodity Price Index, April 3 (1969–70 = 100)	238.2	−2.9
Cereals	233.3	0.9
Chemicals	278.7	4.4
Cotton	193.4	−23.0
Industrial Fibres	164.3	−11.3
Sugar	235.7	−3.7
Textile Yarn	220.8	−0.3
Vegetable Oils	268.4	−8.0
Gold, standard, April 3 (Rs per 10 gm)	1,645.00	−70.00
Silver, April 3 (Rs per kg)	2,670.00	−10.00
SHARES		
RBI Index, March 6 (1969–70 = 100)	195.2	4.7
Aluminium	75.4	−1.9
Cement	206.2	28.6
Fertilisers	203.8	2.9
Paper	226.7	−2.2
Plantations	191.2	−1.9
Shipping	201.4	−17.3
Transport Equipment	302.5	2.8
MONEY		(per cent)
Money Supply, Feb 26		0.4
Bank Deposits		0.9
Foreign Exchange Assets		−0.9

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T MEETS WEST

ENERAL Motors of the US and Toyota of Japan are ecessing joint production of a small car in the US. The lks are about the design for a car that could be marketed by mpanies by 1986. General Motors, which was initially ched by Toyota in December, is also talking to two other w car makers, Suzuki Motor Company and Isuzu Motors, Japanese production of a much smaller car that could be to the US in 1984. Similar talks between Toyota and Ford broke down last summer.

WORKERS ARE CREDITORS

EHTA of Bombay is not the only trade union leader to money to sick companies. American Motors has asked ted Workers (UAW) for loans from production workers to its capital spending goals. The company which lost over re last year, wants its 14,000 UAW members, including indefinite lay off, to lend it 10 per cent of future wage ent increases over the next two years. This would generate crore which it needs to keep its production plans on American Motors would begin repaying the principal per cent annual interest when profits exceed 4 per cent of

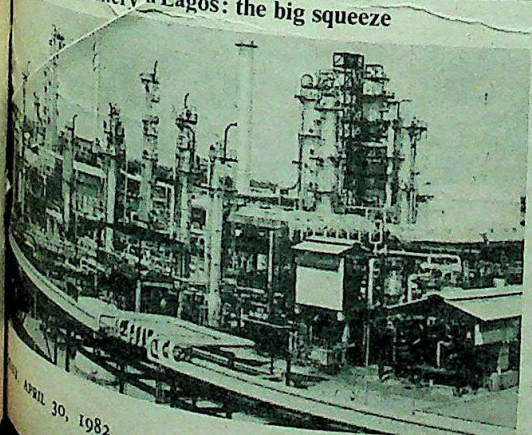
CHANGING UNCLE SAM

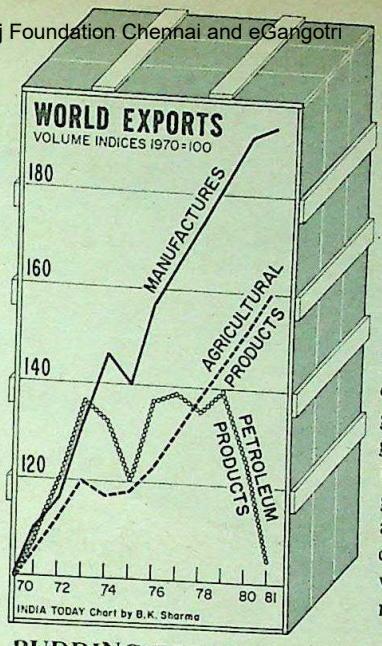
RE Americans than ever before are choosing to keep their come secret from the Government. During 1981, taxable of Rs 81,000 crore—slightly less than India's national went unreported. Americans assess themselves for tax m of the law is not long. Only 2 million tax returns, or less per cent of the total, were subjected to a full audit last year, re than 1,800 prosecutions were launched. It is estimated half the capital gains received from the sale of securities roperty went unreported.

T GEAR IN NIGERIA

SLUMP in the price of crude oil has thrown business in ria out of gear. Its foreign exchange reserves have fallen by to just over Rs 2,500 crore, barely enough to cover six ports. Foreign exchange is so short that many industries hard-pressed for lack of imported spare parts. Peugeot, car company which operates a plant in Lagos, is said to ened to close down its auto assembly unless the ian settles overdue bills worth Rs 140 crore. Unilever, Taylor-Woodrow, a construction company, are also made similar threats. There are reports of devaluation ira in the offing and massive cuts in the five-year ment plan.

Kaduna refinery in Lagos: the big squeeze





LESS TRADE

FOR THE first time since 1958, world trade went into decline and fell by 1 per cent in 1981 to Rs 1,600,000 crore (roughly 16 times India's annual national income). In real terms, the volume stagnated last year, after a rise of just 1 per cent in 1980, according to figures published by a UN organisation. Petroleum trade fell by 14 per cent while farm goods expanded by 5 per cent and manufactures by 3 per cent. In terms of volume, it was the worst trade performance since 1975.

BUDDING FORTUNES

IF SOVIET Russia is the second largest producer of gold in the world, next only to South Africa, one of the Soviet bloc countries, Bulgaria, has acquired a virtual monopoly over the world trade in attar which is costlier than gold. Bulgaria produces 70 per cent of the world supply of attar which sells for Rs 1,410 per 10 gm compared to gold which sells for Rs 1,000 per 10 gm. The near monopoly is held by Bulgaria's state pharmaceutical company, Pharmachim, which owns extensive rose farms about 200 kilometres from Sofia. At least 2,000 rose blossoms are required to produce a single gram of attar of roses.

CHEMICALS FROM COAL

OIL GIANTS are taking increasing interest in that neglected fuel, coal. Three large oil companies have moved into mining and international trading of coal: Shell, which owns 3,300 million tonnes of saleable coal reserves; British Petroleum which owns 2,000 million tonnes; and Total which mined 5 million tonnes last year. They have all acquired coal mines in the US, Australia and South Africa since 1973 when oil prices began moving up. Exxon, the largest oil company in the world, also owns extensive coal reserves but will not begin production until 1986. Many companies are also spending a lot of money on processes designed to make chemicals out of coal, and chemical companies like Du Pont have their own coal mines.

THE DASH FOR SODA ASH

A TUG OF war between the US and Japan over soda ash is in the offing. American companies say that they can supply soda ash to Japan at $185 to $200 (Rs 1,665 to Rs 1,800) per tonne compared with $250 to $275 (Rs 2,250 to Rs 2,475) charged by the four main Japanese suppliers. US companies can extract soda ash from large mineral deposits in Wyoming more cheaply than Japanese makers can synthesise it by chemical processes. Yet, the US companies claim that they could sell only about 60,000 tonnes of soda ash in Japan giving them no more than 5 per cent of the share of the Rs 250-crore market. The reason apparently is the soda ash 'cartel' in Japan which sets import levels, specifies which trading companies are to deal with each US supplier and buys the imports at low US prices for resale by its members at high Japanese prices.

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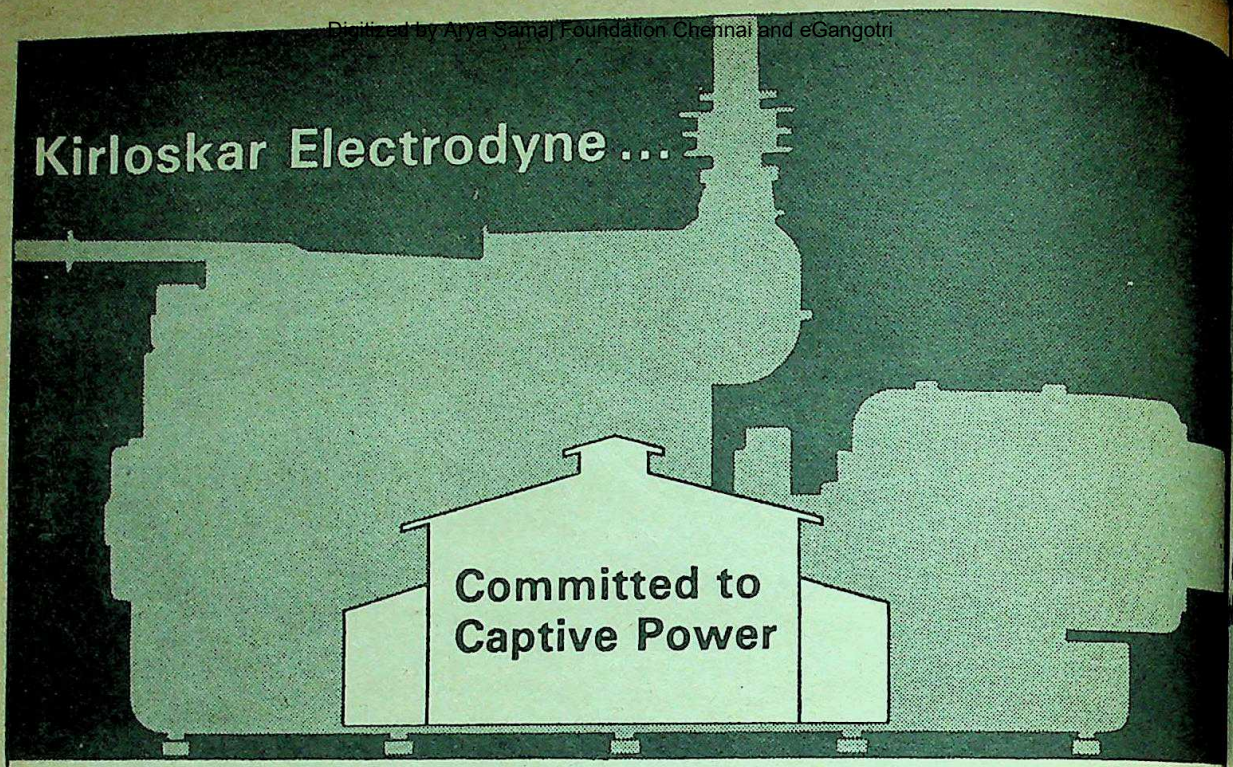

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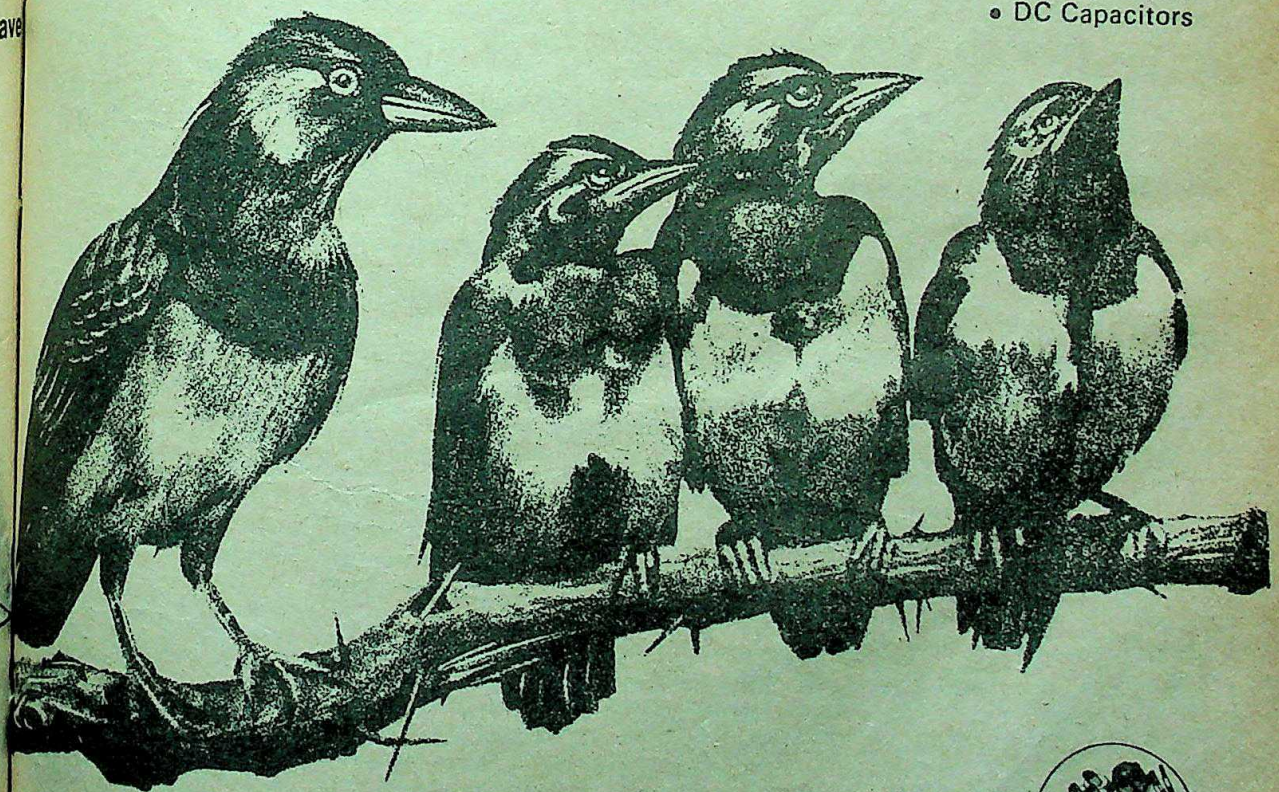

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DEFENCE

Assessing The Dangers

SO ACUTE is the distemper of this decade that many countries find themselves engaged in reappraising their security doctrines and reconstructing their apparatus of military power. In India, Pakistan and China national security debates are being conducted at a level necessarily different from the level of ongoing debates in the United States, Western Europe and the Soviet Union. The Indian national security debate reached an unusually high pitch early this month. The parliamentary debates on the budget demands of the Ministries of Defence and External Affairs turned basically on the core question of India's security and national interests.

Almost simultaneously with the parliamentary debates, a large segment of the country's foreign policy elite got together at two seminars in New Delhi to look closely at questions of national security. One of these two seminars covered such crucial issues as a security doctrine for India, the international strategic environment of the 1980s in which India's security doctrine has to be written, relations with China, Pakistan and the smaller neighbours, as well as the two major global powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, and developments in the Indian Ocean. The other seminar brought together specialists on strategic matters for an exhaustive discussion of issues and problems relating to nuclear options open to India in the light of the rôle nuclear weapons play—and are likely to play—in international and regional affairs during this decade.

Security Debate: The basic difference between the security debates in India and China is over the crucial question of threats—the probable sources of threat and the size and nature of threats. Though China is by no means a major world power, its involvement in the confrontation of the two superpowers has earned it an integral place in the central triangle of the current international alignment of forces: the US-Soviet-China triangle. China's ongoing security debate therefore centres on the country's relationship with the two superpowers. Since security issues are inextricably meshed with domestic affairs as well as external relations, the security debate in China has become part of the more searing debate within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) on the question of modernization of the economy and the armed forces.

The present security debate in China centres mainly on six questions: Is the Soviet Union a growing or declining world power? Is there an immediate Soviet military threat to China? Is another world war inevitable? What is the price China should be ready to pay for strategic cooperation with the United States? What would serve China's interest better: a static relation of hostility with the Soviet Union or ability to manipulate Soviet-US conflicts by establishing limited cooperative relations with both? What are the political, social and moral costs of western inputs for China's modernization? These six issues confirm the high connection between security doctrine and foreign policy which has always characterised strategic debates in the Chinese People's Republic.

The Indian security debate also hinges on a cluster of questions which blur the frontiers between security and foreign policy. Fundamentally, it is a question of India's relationships with its neighbours, particularly Pakistan and China. Since these relationships are to a large extent determined by the relationship between the two superpowers, India's security is seriously affected by the current cold war between Washington and Moscow. This cold war has triggered a process of global militarisation of which four manifestations are of particular concern to India, namely, the transfer of sophisticated American weapons to Pakistan; the military buildup in the Indian Ocean; the gathering crises in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East; and the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan. Each of these manifestations received particular attention at the New Delhi seminar on national security. Pakistan dominated the intense debate, confirming that it is India's security problem number one.

Indian Conception: In this respect the seminar debate mirrored the parliamentary debates on defence and external affairs. The Defence Ministry's Annual Report for 1981-82 offers a three-paragraph description of "the national security environment" in which two paragraphs are devoted to Pakistan, one to the Persian Gulf and another to the escalating global rivalry between the superpowers. For the first time since 1960 China is not mentioned as a threat to Indian security. On the contrary, the Defence Ministry notes, "There has been some improvement in our relations with China"; it does not conceal its hope that the process of improvement will continue and it is its assessment that the threat to India's security comes primarily from Pakistan armed by the United States, and from the tensions and conflicts generated by superpower rivalry in the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf and the Middle East.

The threat scenario which emerged at the national security seminar was not fundamentally different. What was remarkable, however, was that participants differed strongly in their assessment of the threat from Pakistan. Indeed if there was a consensus at the seminar it was on a single theme: the unilateral American build-up in the Indian Ocean. It was maintained that the US Rapid Deployment Force which has been fashioned primarily as an instrument of instant military intervention in local conflicts in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East, and the US policy to transfer highly sophisticated weapons to Pakistan, pose a serious threat to India's security. However, the seminar paid no pointed attention either to the nature of the American threat or to ways and means to counter it, nor to India's countervailing relationship with the Soviet Union.

DISCUSSIONS on the Indian Ocean raised the interesting question whether India's navy should be developed around a coastal or a maritime strategy; but the question remained unanswered. The contrast with China is striking. In that country a protracted debate between coastal and maritime viewpoints appears to have been won by the maritimists and the navy has pride of place among the services in the last two years, precisely since the ICBM support operations in May 1980. There is little doubt that its navy will soon have a blue water capability.

Both in the parliamentary debates and at the national security seminar there were varied perceptions of the threat from Pakistan. No one opposed a continuing dialogue with Pakistan and the optimists and the pessimists were more or less equally matched. The optimists argued for a vigorous pursuit of the dialogue for a no-war pact or a friendship treaty and rejected a dodging exercise. The pessimists were certain that the military regime in Pakistan will not conclude a friendship treaty with India and were doubtful that a no-war pact would offer more than cosmetic improvement in Indo-Pakistan relations.

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National Security: When it came to the question of framing a national security doctrine for India, several points of view emerged. It stressed that real security lay in India's political unity and its economic development and its ability to conquer mass and squalor. The need for adequate military power was stressed, but it was tempered somewhat by the question: how much is enough? This question has a particular edge now because the next year's defence budget is for a hefty Rs 5,100 crore, an increase of 21.4 per cent over the budget of 1981–82. While some argued that India should have a national security council and a national security doctrine, others cautioned against taking an [illegible]—even predominantly—external view of security.

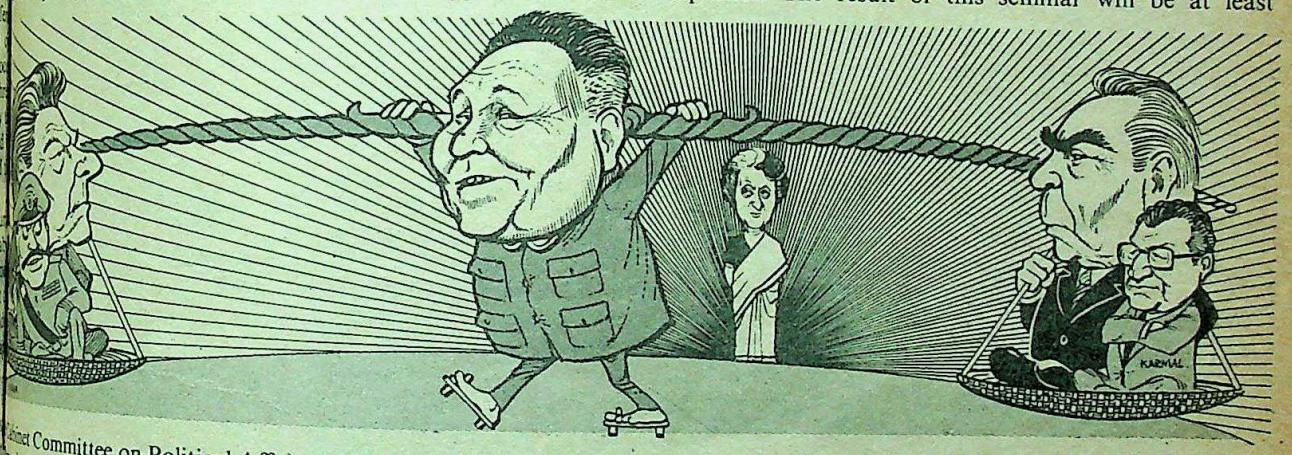
There is a big gap in the ongoing Indian national security [illegible] is created by the Government's extreme reluctance not [illegible] contribute to the debate conceptually but also to release [illegible] which is the staple of any informed discussion. For [illegible] the Defence Ministry's Annual Report says that a defence [illegible] 1980–85 has been drawn up, keeping in view the changes [illegible] occurred in the security environment in the neighbourhood. At the current rate of defence expenditure, the country [illegible] be spending well over Rs 30,000 crore on this five-[illegible] plan. There is no indication whatsoever that the plan [illegible] debated and discussed by competent agencies.

[illegible] ministry's report indicates that the plan has been approved [illegible] Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs which is advised by [illegible] Committee for Defence Planning. The latter committee is [illegible] by the Cabinet secretary and is composed of the three [illegible] chiefs and six secretaries. Obviously, too narrow and too [illegible] a machinery to play around with massive volumes of [illegible] the future of the country! Once again, the contrast with [illegible] attention. The defence debate in China has not only [illegible] argumentative but also strikingly well-informed, and [illegible] of officials of the CCP, the Government and the PLA have [illegible], including Deng Xiaoping, Hu Yaobang, the party [illegible] and Huang Hua, the foreign minister.

Nuclear Options: Part of the current national security debate [illegible] on the question whether and in what specific circumstances India may have to go in for nuclear weapons. This was the [illegible] second seminar which was organised by the Centre [illegible] Research. More than a dozen background papers were [illegible] to the 30-odd participants; together, these papers [illegible] most comprehensive background so far to various [illegible] relating to India's nuclear options. The debate centred [illegible] four main questions: What would a 'nuclearisation' [illegible] comprise, now and in future? And what would it [illegible] just financially, but also politically? Should world nuclear [illegible] be one of India's important goals? If so, would [illegible] beyond the present near-nuclear stage help or hinder in [illegible] that goal, especially having regard to the current anti-nuclear popular movements in the West? Leaving Pakistan's nuclear ambitions aside, are there compelling reasons for India to go nuclear? And should Pakistan exhibit nuclearisation in any form, what should be India's response? Is it possible to deter Pakistan from going the nuclear way by diplomacy and specific foreign policy initiatives or responses?

The seminar discussed at length the role nuclear weapons play in the present international system and how these weapons have become part of the systematic deprivation of the developing Third World by the developed countries of the North. It then analysed India's national security environment as it has been, or may be, affected by the acquisition of nuclear weapons by countries that are India's friends or foes. Predictably, a lot of attention was given to Pakistan's fledgling nuclear programme, more specifically to its ability and will to make nuclear bombs.

It became clear in the course of discussion that India could exercise its nuclear options either in defiance of the present discriminatory, exclusive nuclear regime of five nuclear powers or in anticipation of, or in response to, a Pakistani nuclear bomb. A large number of participants felt that a Pakistani blast or a Pakistani bomb would inevitably lead to an Indian nuclear option. Others argued that a nuclear option was not inevitable; a Pakistani blast and even a Pakistani bomb could be met with non-nuclear Indian responses. The result of this seminar will be at least one—perhaps two—publications spanning the entire gamut of policy options available to India in the event of nuclearisation of the subcontinent.



Future Challenges: Even so, the Defence Ministry's Annual Report takes no cognisance of Pakistan's nuclear programme and is therefore understandably silent on what India's response should be to a Pakistani nuclear blast and a Pakistani nuclear bomb. The current tendency is to equate the one with the other, indicating an Indian reluctance to accept a Pakistani blast the same way as the world has been persuaded to accept the Indian blast of 1974: capability without weapons.

It is pretty certain, however, that if India does enter a nuclear race it will be with Pakistan, however galling that scenario may be to those who hold that India is already a major power. China has gone 15 years ahead of India in nuclear muscle. After the solid-fuelled ICBM test of May 1980 China has proceeded to develop an SLBM (submarine launched ballistic missile) force. China could now acquire the ability to strike at the continental US and cover the whole of the USSR, and will probably soon develop an invulnerable second-strike SLBM force. An article in the March-April issue of *Survival*, organ of the London-based International Institute of Strategic Studies says: "If there is a pattern to the new trends (in China's security doctrine), it is that forces more able to be projected outside of China's immediate area are being developed so long as they can remain under relatively firm control."

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KAMALAHASAN

Southern Streak

THERE has never been anything quite like him before. Cocky, brash and brimming with confidence, Kamalahasan, the baby-faced actor from the deep south, has stormed the citadels of Bombay's tightly-knit film industry like an invading army. In the process, he has destroyed established taboos and popular myths and elevated himself to superstar status in the remarkably short span of a little over a year—and on the strength of just one film. *Ek Duuje Ke Liye*, the soppy, sentimental love story which was his vehicle to instant national stardom, recorded its 36th continuous week in Bombay last fortnight and was the second biggest money-spinner last year after rival Amitabh Bachchan's *Laawaris*.

In fact, in the first 20 weeks after its release, the film overtook the all-time revenue record of *Sholay*. "Kamal is the biggest thing that hit the Hindi film industry last year," says an awed Gulshan Rai, a leading Bombay film distributor. "The number of roles and the kind of price being offered to him definitely put him second only to Amitabh." Adds K. Balachander, who directed *Ek Duuje Ke Liye*: "Kamal will rule the Indian film industry for some time to come."

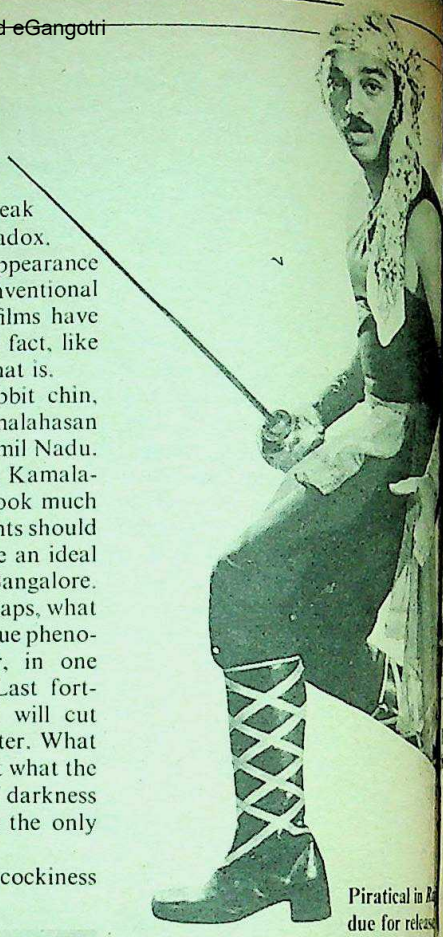
In the past few months, Kamal, as he is better known in Bombay, has snapped up five-star roles in films opposite such major heroines like Hema Malini, Poonam Dhillon and Reena Roy, and is currently negotiating for seven other movies. His next film, *Sanam Teri Kasam*, a musical in which he stars opposite Reena Roy, is due for release later this month and is widely expected to put the final stamp of approval on a career that has few, if any, parallels in the annals of Indian films.

With Rati Agnihotri in *Ek Duuje Ke Liye*: instant stardom

Paradox: For one, Kamalahasan, 28, is the first south Indian male star to have made it big in the secular world of Bombay films. Further, like the character he portrayed in *Ek Duuje Ke Liye*, Kamalahasan speaks faltering, ungrammatical Hindi—a factor that has largely been responsible for the failure of south Indian stars to break into Bombay films. The main paradox, however, lies in his physical appearance which is nowhere near the conventional he-man hero image that Indian films have depended on so far. He looks, in fact, like the boy next door—in Madras, that is.

With his pomaded hair, rabbit chin, soulful eyes and snazzy attire, Kamalahasan could be seen in every street in Tamil Nadu. Though 5 feet 8 inches in height, Kamalahasan's stocky build makes him look much shorter. "His chest is where his pants should be; otherwise he could have made an ideal hero," says a giggly college girl in Bangalore. Saddled with these obvious handicaps, what then makes Kamalahasan the unique phenomenon that he is? The answer, in one expressive word, is confidence. Last fortnight, he told INDIA TODAY: "I will cut through Hindi films as if it is butter. What matters is not my southy looks but what the audience sees in the two hours of darkness in a movie theatre where we are the only lights."

Multilingual Star: Kamal's cockiness is understandable. In Madras, the brash young star's abattoir, three of his recent Tamil films are big commercial hits. *Moondram Pirai*, in which Kamalahasan plays a puritanical schoolteacher, has been displaying 'house full' signs at every show, while *Vazhvemayam* and *Saval*, two typical pot-boilers, have put Kamal on a par with Rajnikanth, the reigning king of Tamil films. It is well-known that Kamalahasan was a south Indian star before making his dramatic debut on the Bombay film s... very few of his teeny-bopper army o... aware that he is the only south Indi... be a simultaneous money-sp... Malayalam, Telugu and Kann... apart from his Tamil releases.



Piratical in R... due for releas...

In fact, of the 110 films th... starred in so far, he has made 65 in ... in Malayalam, nine in Telugu, ... Kannada and one each in Be... Hindi. Kamal's remarkable succe... the fact that he speaks all the sou... languages fluently and is possibly ... multilingual star in the country ... enough, it has been Kamalahasan's ... looks and natural self-confidence ... combined to launch him to super... His fans, most of whom are college ... instantly accepted the image of a ... hesitant Madrasi trying to woo ... Indian girl in his faltering Hindi.

There is a freshness in his ... immediately strikes a sympathetic ... has never overplayed a role, nev... been guilty of the opposite. ... Kamalahasan has an in-built ... adopting just the right approach ... also the grudging admission that ... film scene was staling with a surfe... chested studs named either Kapo... all performing the same stereotyp...

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1st Film
KALATHUR KANNAMMA
TAMIL—1960

100th Film
RAJAPARVAI
TAMIL—1981

course, acting in films that were radically different from standard south Indian fare.

His incredible versatility enabled him to cover a wide range of roles, each more demanding than the next. In *Kalyanaraman*, the Tamil block-buster, he played a buck-toothed villager while in *Padinaru Vayathinle*, he portrayed a village idiot with stunning reality. In fact, Kamalahasan's willingness to take on anti-hero roles, something that very few Indian film stars are prepared to do, immediately stamped him as an actor with a dramatic difference. "It's a renaissance," exults Balachander, "and Kamal has carved out his own era. He is not only a one-man industry but an institution by himself."

But like all meteors, is Kamalahasan only a passing phenomenon? Will all the adulation and effusive praise fade as abruptly as it started? Most people in the industry and those close to Kamal think not. "He is ready to explode like dynamite with a short fuse," says M. Sarvanam, Tamil film producer, rather dramatically. But Sarvanam is one of the producers who first brought Kamal to the screen 23 years ago and has carefully watched his career since then. He should know how long the craze will last.

BUT even without that recommendation, Kamal is undoubtedly a bundle of explosive talent. He is an accomplished dancer, choreographer, stuntman, producer and director rolled into one. Nowhere is this more evident than in this personal life. His spacious single-storey rented house in Madras's posh Sriram Nagar, where he lives with his wife Vani, a former classical dancer whom he married in 1977, is a colourful mixture of contradictions. The living-room is dominated by ornate, but modern furniture and a pair of antique swords hung on one wall.

Upstairs, his study is lined with a bewildering assortment of books ranging from thrillers to heavy philosophy. Along one wall is a treasured collection of books on cinema.

For a man who has not even passed his matriculation, Kamal devours books with an insatiable appetite. He is also obsessive regarding his health and has added a mini gymnasium to the house.

The overall effect reflects not only Kamal's multi-faceted interests but his constant search for perfection in his profession. He has switched from his white bellbottomed trousers and loud shirts to a sober white churidar outfit but every now and again, the innate rebel in him comes bubbling to the surface, particularly in his conversation. "I do not subscribe to any thought pattern," he says, admitting that he is a "bundle of contradictions". "Anything imposed on me, and I rebel. I am open to suggestions but hate anything being forced on me. Call me an opportunist, a nonconformist, whatever you like. But if you ask me what I am, I can only tell you one thing—a happy man."

Basic Decision: His marriage to Vani is in a way a revolt against conformity. He had met her two years earlier on the sets of one of his films in which she was performing. Recalls Vani, "We were basically poles apart. He was an introvert and preferred his own circle of friends while I loved company. I think that is why we jelled. If we were alike it would have been a boring affair." Unlike other stars who cared for their bachelor image, Kamal married at the height of his career, ignoring warnings from industry circles that it would send his rating crashing. Explains Kamal, "Marriage was a basic decision of my life. Even if I was a priest I would have got married. As a bachelor you get restless. Sex is a rare commodity and you get love fever. Marriage has tied me. It has put an end to my nocturnal activities and regularised my life."

It has also allowed him to develop other interests. "I've never had a typical day in my life," he boasts. His average day varies with his moods. On an impulse he will climb into a track suit and go for a 10 kilometre jog at six in the evening. Or he might lock himself in his study and dash off a poem or an article for a Tamil magazine he writes regularly for. There are days when he grabs his camera and spends hours taking pictures of his dogs or his wife.

There are also days when he likes to put on his all-time favourite movie, Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane*, and watch it avidly perhaps for the 100th time. But whatever he does, cinema and acting are his overriding passion. He is currenty fitting a video set into his Volkswagen van so that he can watch films while travelling and whenever he has

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Kamalahasan on and off the screen: wielding a camera, as a blind violinist in *Raja Parvai*; in *Vazhvemayam* and after a work-out

conversation invariably ends up some discussion on cinema.

Child: Kamal's love affair with when he was three years old peared on the screen in *Kalathur* in which he was an illegitimate his parents' active encourage- father, D. Srinivasan is a mall played bit roles in a handful with mounting impatience. her brother Chandrahasan: a difficult child. He was ex- rous and tough and would do a dare." A friend once asked jump off a first floor balcony and without hesitation, landing up in multiple fractures as a result. he was crazy about films and GR film over 100 times.

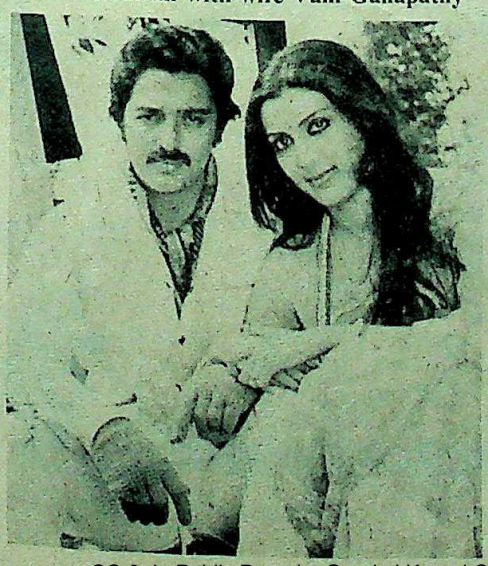
ated with stagnation, Kamal joi- troupe for Rs 95 a month while ers. When the troupe wound up, harat Natyam, formed his own set off on a tour of Maharashtra. ical knee cut his dancing career

he had dropped out of school a salesman to earn a living but that as well. He got a job as an ography and was soon pro- stant director which was only a for clapper boy. It wasn't till Kamal got the break he was Balachander hired Kamal to play lead in his film *Arangetram* and born. Recalls Balachander: "I a burning fire in the boy and I actively he was made for greater

Performance: Ironically enough, foray into Malayalam films him fame. Playing the role of a who commits murder to save his *Kumari*, Kamal won the first of his six consecutive Filmfare awards for best actor. From then on, the legend could only grow and 1975 saw his stunning portrayal of a singer in *Apoorva Rangagal*. This was followed by an equally powerful performance in *Oru Oothappur Kan Simitukirathu* in which he plays a fiddle-footed lover and in 1977, he was acknowledged as the south Indian film industry's most talented young actor for his performance in the smash hit *Padinar Vayathinile*. In 1978, his devastating performance as a psychopathic murderer in *Sigappu Rojakkal* won rave reviews. The next year, his stature grew with the highly successful *Kalyanaraman* and in 1980, he celebrated his 100th film by producing *Raja Parvai*, in which he played a blind violinist.

But the turning point was undoubtedly his Telugu film debut in *Maro Charitra* which was later made into the now historic *Ek Duuje Ke Liye*. His string of successes in south India were not just a result of his inborn acting ability but his own efforts to immerse himself in each role. When Balachander wanted him to play the part of a musician he learnt the mridangam. For his role in *Avargal*, he learnt ventriloquism. Coupled with his talent for picking up languages, Kamal was well on his way to stardom.

Kamalahasan with wife Vani Ganapathy



Serious Actor: Success, however, has hardly changed him, just his life-style. Industry sources say that Kamal is hard-working, punctual and friendly, always joking with the extras. Says Sri Priya, who has co-starred with him in a number of films, "With Kamal one has to be careful. One moment he is fooling with everyone but when he starts acting he is absolutely serious and everyone around had better be the same." Kamal himself says that he doesn't believe in "all this born-with-talent crap". He struggled hard to get where he is and he never stops learning. Director Balu Mahendru is impressed with Kamal's efforts to be a serious student of cinema who keeps abreast of events in filmdom and never misses a film festival.

If he has any one failing, it is his inability to work with mediocre directors and rise above them. The poor performances in *Saval* and *Vazhvemayam* were a result of precisely that, though both films were box-office successes. Another handicap is his boyish look which restricts him from acting in more mature roles. So far, he has not been selective about his Tamil films with the result that his career is littered with what are popularly known as *dishum dishum* roles in which he comes across as a ham.

Kamal, however, has the grace to admit to his failings. "You will find the ham in me," he acknowledges, "but I want to be rich and idealists are not wealthy people. I am trying to mix the perfect cocktail between idealism and practicality." With his recent success in the Bombay film industry and a steadily growing fan following, that should not prove too difficult a task.

—RAJ CHENGAPPA

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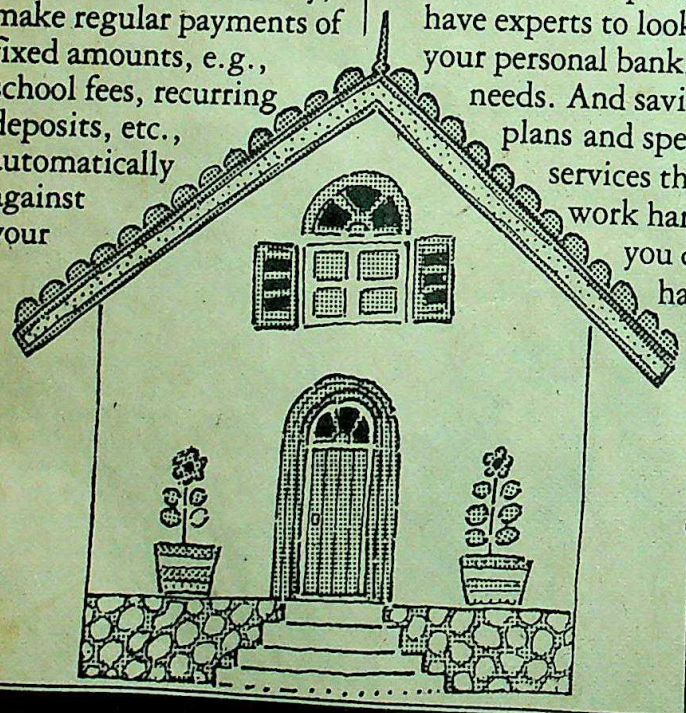

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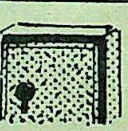

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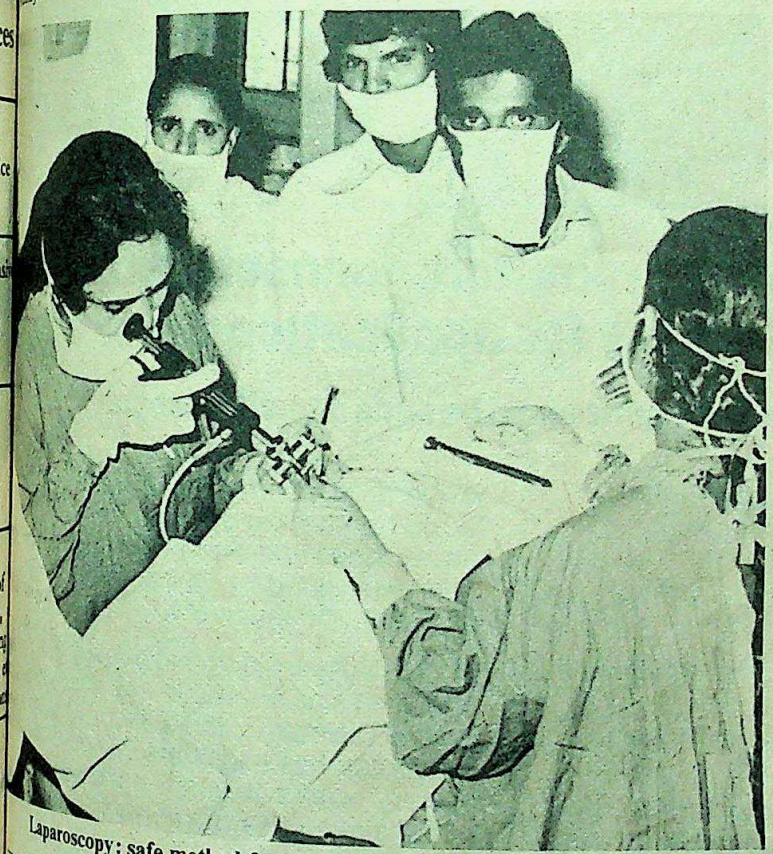
trument Of Success

AST time that Madhya Pradesh
planning officials had been
with themselves had been five
the sterilisation figures had
the graph. This time too, as the
drew to an end, there was a
of euphoria. Sterilisations in
picked up at a pace that is
themselves quite bewildered.
Shrikhande, 58, the state's
family welfare and public
only be described as a wave."
ya Pradesh figures are sur-

from Madhya Pradesh, the figures dropped to 37,000. In the three years that followed the annual number of sterilisations gradually rose to 1,30,000; but it was in 1981–82 that the doctors were really surprised: the number of sterilisations for the year is given at over 2,00,000.

There are reports of women besieging doctors to perform the operation on them which seems something like a dream to those who thought that the end of the Emergency had signalled the death of family planning. The instrument of success is the laparoscope,



Laparoscopy: safe method for women of the right age group

not because they are the
Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh
ester this year. They are remark-
during the Emergency the state
of the administration's steriliz-
It was the only state in 1976–77
mber of operations crossed the
rk, rising nine times over the
ar.

Surprise: The reaction to the
forced sterilisations was as bad
northern states—perhaps even
77–78, when some 2,000 com-
ng to sterilisation were made

a fibre optic instrument, which gains entry through a small incision and lights up the insides. The doctor looks through the eyepiece, finds a loop of the fallopian tube and presses a switch that shoots a ring over the tube to block it. Of the roughly 2 lakh sterilisations in 1981–82, some 85,000 were on women who underwent laparoscopy. Says Shrikhande: "For one, it is quick, taking just five to six minutes. Secondly, it is possible for a woman to return to her home or fields within a day or so and resume work. And thirdly, the incision is so small that it barely shows. It all adds up." Laparoscopy has become something of a rural craze, perhaps because it is new and simpler.

It speaks for the simplicity of the method that there are just 20 doctors who are performing laparoscopy, and of these a dozen are from Gujarat since Madhya Pradesh is still in the process of training its people. For the visiting doctors it is good money as they are paid Rs 21 for each operation and they normally perform between 200-250 each day in a camp. The state has just half a dozen laparoscopes—each costing Rs 30,000—but is getting more.

Long-term Effects: While the success has been undoubtedly spectacular, it has also raised several questions. Ever since the Emergency experience, men have been reluctant to undergo vasectomy. That, plus the advent of laparoscopy late last year has placed the burden of sterilisation entirely on women. In 1972-73 for example, more than two-thirds of the people sterilised were men. But last year (1981-82) the male percentage had dropped to less than 20.

Says a gynaecologist in Bhopal: "Before thrusting the entire responsibility on women, more thinking must be done. The long-term effect of such a step has to be studied." Moreover, a large number of the women sterilised are in their mid-20s having borne three children. Admits Health Secretary P.R. Chari: "In some cases a traumatic experience could be in store for someone who is sterilised at such a young age."

The danger lies in not only vasectomy being ignored as a birth control method, but also in the fact that other terminal methods could take a back seat. Already the figures illustrate this trend: Intra-Uterine Device (IUD) insertions have fallen from 47,000, 10 years ago, to nearly half that figure and condom users have remained more or less static at around 80,000–90,000.

Problems: Chari agrees that non-terminal methods are as important—if not more so—than terminal methods, but points to the problems that go with a state as large and backward as Madhya Pradesh. Says he: "Since vaginal hygiene in villages is found to be poor, IUD insertions can be promoted more successfully only if a regular supply can be assured. And doing that in far-flung rural areas is not very easy."

So, for the time being at any rate, laparoscopy is obviously going to be at the centre of activity. But Shrikhande feels that the current wave will last for a year or two because, "The current converts are from the soft core that is easily swayed. After they have been dealt with the more cautious and finally the hard core who are opposed to it have to be convinced. And that is certainly going to be more difficult."

—SREEKANT KHANDEKAR

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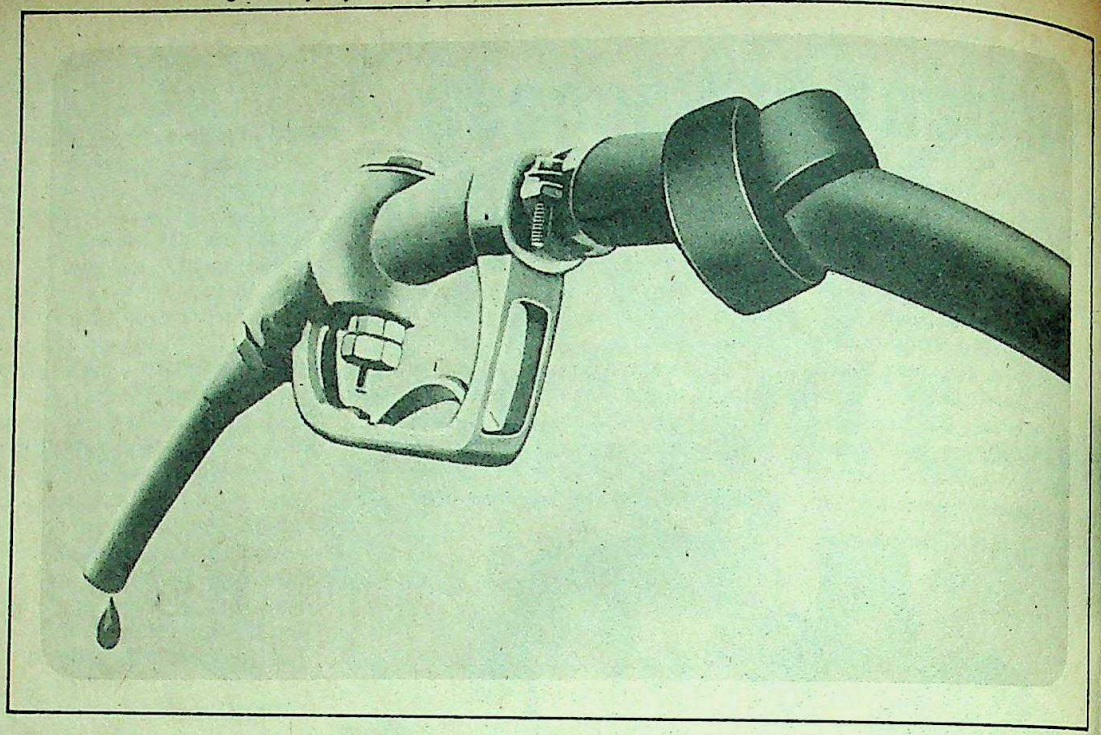

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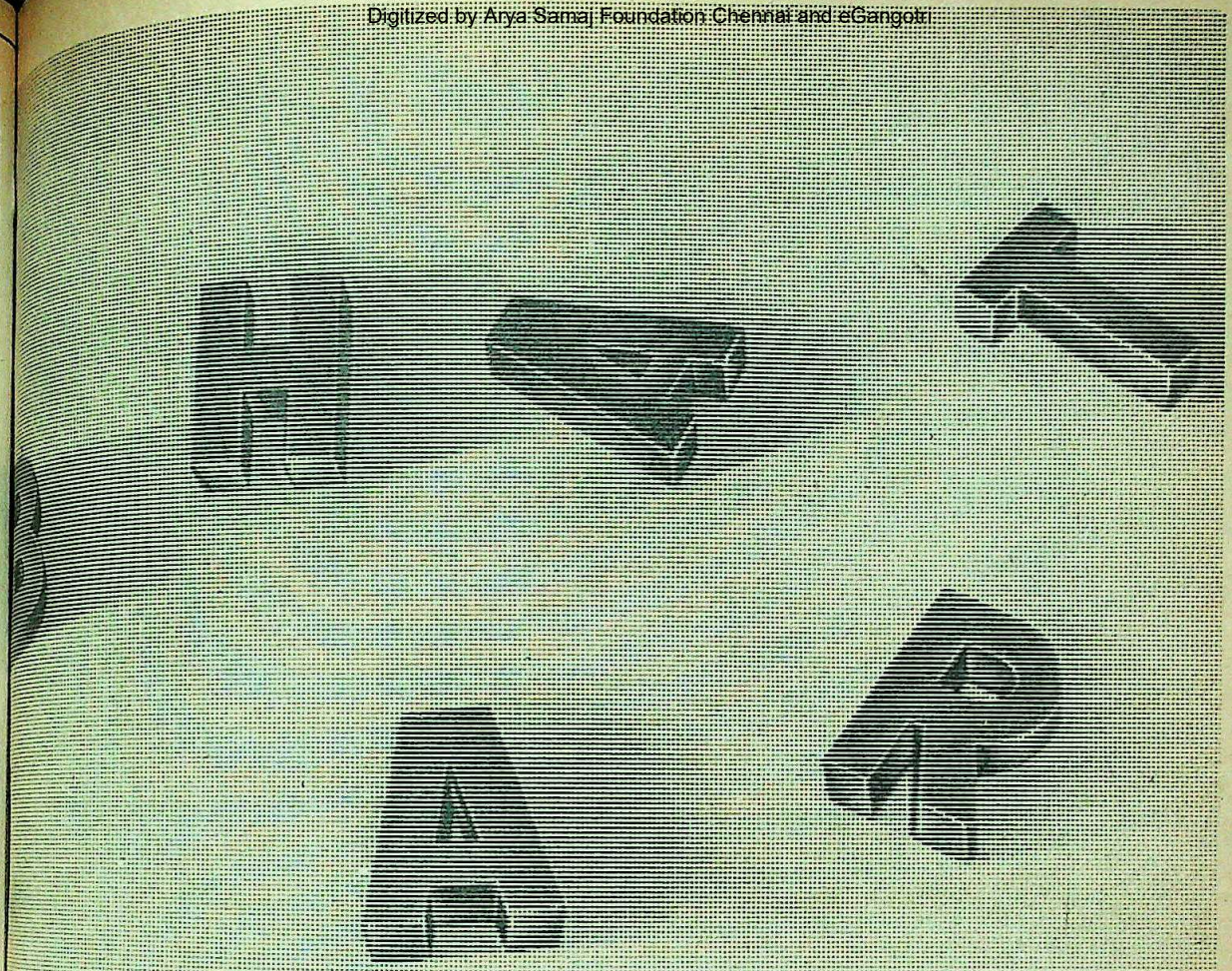

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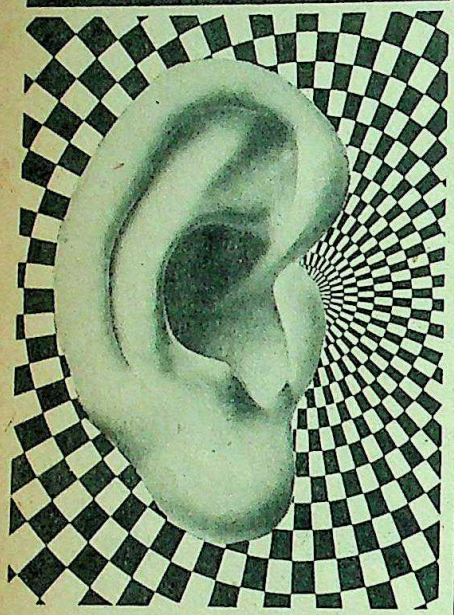

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Hollywood's Revenge

SURAAG

Produced, directed and written by Dr Jagmohan Mundhra

Starring: Sanjeev Kumar, Shabana Azmi and Parikshat Sahni

WHEN an expatriate Indian makes a commercial film aimed at the masses in his homeland, it's time to run. And when the film professes to be a mystery complete with a pipe-smoking Sherlock Holmes (Sanjeev Kumar) and dim-wit sidekick (Parikshat Sahni), head for the hills. Loudly touted as Hollywood's first Hindi film, *Suraag* (The Clue) leaves the viewer with one dominant emotion: the hope that it will be the last.

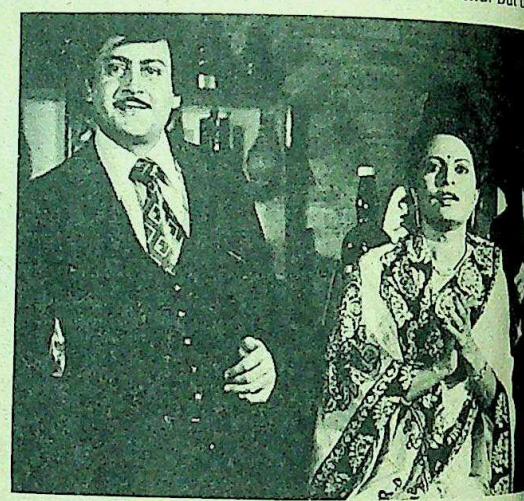
Dr Jagmohan Mundhra, who made his film debut after picking up a doctorate in motion picture marketing, obviously lacks the most rudimentary knowledge of what Indian audiences are looking for. Bringing to the film the ignorant arrogance of the expatriate, he has approached his subject with the attitude of a primary school teacher teaching first graders the basics of deduction. The clues which lead to Sanjeev Kumar's far from phenomenal deductions are announced with all the subtlety of a sledgehammer being used to drive home a tin tack.

An Indian doctor in Los Angeles (Parikshat Sahni) comes bride-hunting to India with his mentor, Sanjeev Kumar, who plays a pot-bellied professor of criminology. After sifting through a string of pushy, domineering women who answer his matrimonial advertisement in Bombay, he meets the greatest caricature of them all: sweet-natured, husband-worshipping Shabana Azmi. They marry and Sahni returns to the US, leaving Azmi to deal with Immigration.

Plot Thickens: On her way to the US, Azmi becomes the unsuspecting carrier for a gang of dope smugglers of a consignment of cocaine. She clears customs in New York, calls her husband to tell him all is well, and boards another plane to Los Angeles. At some undisclosed stage she is waylaid and kidnapped, and her husband receives a ransome note.

All this should make up a cluttered mystery story which co... ravelled in the last reel, leaving ... weds free to fade into the su... Mundhra, determined to justify ... title, now has the clues dropping ... loose: matchboxes, nightclubs, ... businessmen, photographs and ... jostling for equal attention.

Kumar, the Holmes-substitute ... to the conclusion that Mac... dubious-looking businessman is the ... question. The clues all point to M... and away from the real crook, wh... have given Mundhra enough twis... the film through to its end. But the ...



Sahni, Geeta Siddharth and Sanjeev Kumar in *Suraag*

impatient with the wait, gives the ... right after the interval. Any sem... mystery is discarded with the ... except that nobody tells Sanjeev K... and he continues to potter through ... looking for and finding ridicu...

Simplistic: *Suraag* is a sim... conceived movie lacking as mu... cally as it does in narrative. The ca... is amateurish; the best sequences ... are stock scenes of Las Vegas, Lo... and a Pan Am aircraft probably ... from the many studio lots ... Hollywood.

Mundhra's knowledge of ... would leave the head of a pin unsc... actors blunder through their lines ... sequences are so poorly shot that ... a dancer, looks stunted, Laver... black glamour-girl, elongated, ac... edited with a total disregard fo... And by the end of the film there ... mystery left unsolved: how the fil... at all.

—CHANDER ...

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A barefoot devotion walks the Himalayan ecstacy.

Kedarnath. Badrinath. Hemkund.

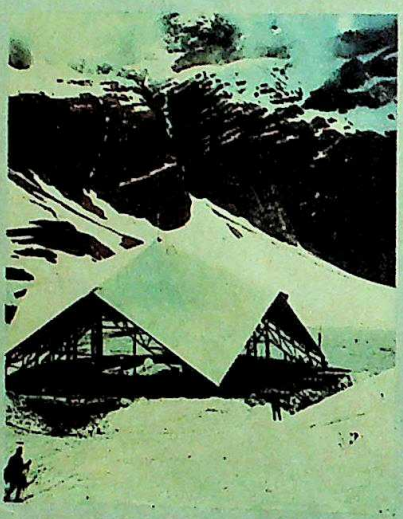
Himalayas are magnanimous. Imposingly vast arrays of invincible peaks. Peaks that have stood monumently to the torrents of time. The sky is patched with red triangular flags, flying from the top of stone-walled temples. The whispers of quiet flowing brookes and falling river-heads is suddenly joined in by the air renting songs and prayers. Again and again. Pilgrims have come !

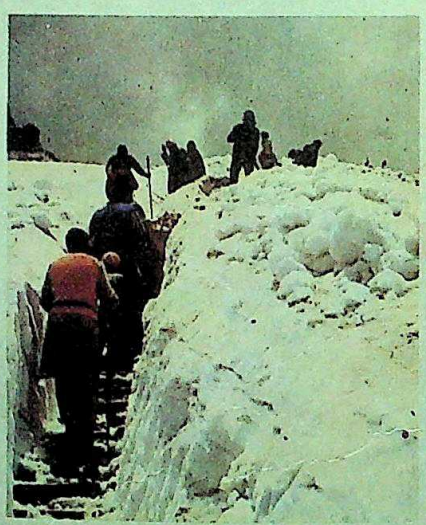
Kedarnath : Dedicated to the Sadasiva, the Kedarnath Temple is one of the finest pieces of architecture rendered in Uttarakhand style. Situated between Gangotri Glacier and Mana Valley, it was built in the fifteenth century.

where Guru Gobind Singh is said to have meditated in one of his previous births. The place originally known as Lakshman Kund abounds in gorgeous floral wealth. It is the highest religious spot in the world.

Gangotri : At a height of over 3,000 metres. It's here that Ganga descends on earth. The temple of Gangotri is dedicated to the goddess Ganga.

Yamunotri : On the western bank of the great peak of Banderpunch, the temple of Yamunotri is dedicated to Ganga's sister: Surya Kund is the sacred pond formed by hot water springs...nature's wonder!





Badrinath : Devoted to Lord Vishnu, the temple of Badrinath is situated at the confluence of the Rishi Ganga and Alaknanda rivers at a height of 3,133 metres. It is one of the four Dhamas of Hindus.

Hemkund : Dates back to the time of Pandavas. A Gurudwara is erected here

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WHEN LACQUERED STICKS CLASH, AND DANCERS MOVE IN HARMONY, DANDYA RAS REFLEC ITS BOISTEROUSNESS IN LAKSHMI MACHINES...

Inspite of a comple
numerous lacquere
there is a strange
harmony in Dandya
colourful folk dance
Gujarat. As one hea
clash of sticks, the
wanders on to simi
patterns, similar so
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If today, some of th
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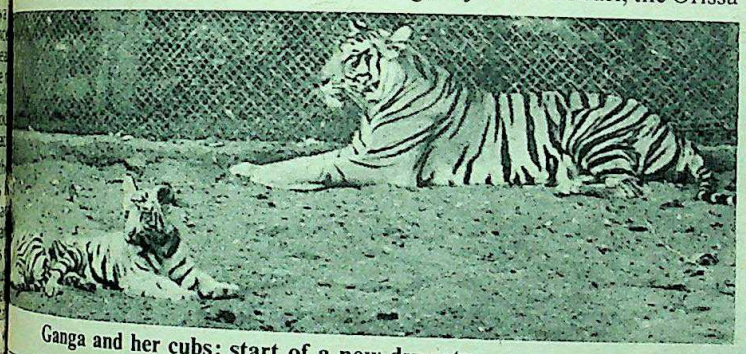
Multiplication Game

...of sight it is like any other ...the country. But for wild- ...servators, Nandan Kanan, ...sprawling 300-acre animal ...become an important land- ...servation of species on the ...ction. Nandan Kanan has ...an entirely new gene-pool of ...ich is expected to boost the ...val of this rare species. In an ...ual event, a normal, tawny ...e birth to two white cubs for ...e on December 8 last year. ...39, Orissa's wildlife con- ...r: "So far, white tigers have ...through cross-breeding but ...e only one of its kind in the ...e, we hope to present our ...the rest of the world so that ...n multiply."

ordinary tiger, Ganga, a spotted tigress kept in a neighbouring cubicle, delivered three white cubs on January 8, 1980. The cubs were sired by Deepak who was also tawny. These cubs, one male and two female, were named Debabrata, Alaka and Nanda. According to Mishra neither Ganga nor Deepak has been known to have mated with the white tigers of Rewa. Shubra, the white tigress from Rewa also mated with Deepak and gave birth to two cubs, one of them white. With the birth of two more white cubs this year the total number of white cubs at Nandan Kanan is six.

Encouraged by the success, Orissa's Forests Department plans to reintroduce the white tigers into their natural habitat. There are no white tigers in the jungles now and therefore, there is little chance of their numbers increasing. Says A.N. Tiwari, the Orissa Government's secretary for Tourism: "If our plan succeeds in a couple of years, Orissa will be able to gift at least one white tiger of Nandan Kanan origin to all the states." The state Government's proposal of planned cross-breeding of white tigers has been approved by the Central Government.



Ganga and her cubs: start of a new dynasty

...ger's history goes back to ...former Maharaja Martendey ...captured a white tiger from ...in Madhya Pradesh. The ...named Mohan, had fathered ...by the early 1970s. According ...servationists there are only 49 ...Rewa origin in the world and ...have been sent from India. ...know that the white tigers of ...ering from weakness and di- ...these tigers are old and have ...er and are unable to repro- ...duce.

...ection: Little did Nandan ...ers know in 1979 when they ...Delhi Zoo for a Rewa white ...generation would start from ...Shubra, a white tigress was ...Orissa Government in ...and became an instant tou- ...The primary objective of the ...was to produce a couple of ...from Shubra through cross- ...breeding. Shubra could mate with an ordinary tiger, Ganga, a spotted tigress kept in a neighbouring cubicle, delivered three white cubs on January 8, 1980. The cubs were sired by Deepak who was also tawny. These cubs, one male and two female, were named Debabrata, Alaka and Nanda. According to Mishra neither Ganga nor Deepak has been known to have mated with the white tigers of Rewa. Shubra, the white tigress from Rewa also mated with Deepak and gave birth to two cubs, one of them white. With the birth of two more white cubs this year the total number of white cubs at Nandan Kanan is six.

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Attention is now focussed on Debabrata, Alaka and Nanda who will be old enough to reproduce in a couple of months. With a pregnancy period of 100 days and a gap of seven months required between deliveries, Nandan Kanan officials expect to add at least a dozen white tigers within the next five years. Besides this, Ganga is likely to repeat her performance next winter. Both Ganga and Deepak, living separately at the moment, have been leaving markings—a sign of their desire for a romantic reunion. Exuberant about his tigers, Mishra says: "Deepak will be remembered in wildlife history as another Mohan and his dynasty is likely to last for another half a century." This optimistic prophecy will, doubtless, cheer all wildlife enthusiasts in the country. —PRABHU CHAWLA in Bhubaneswar

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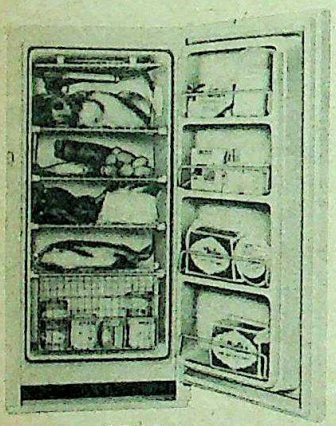

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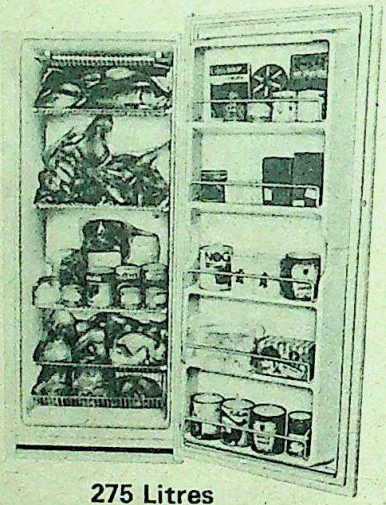

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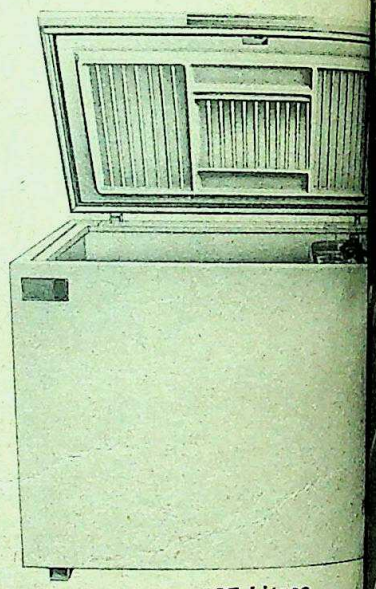

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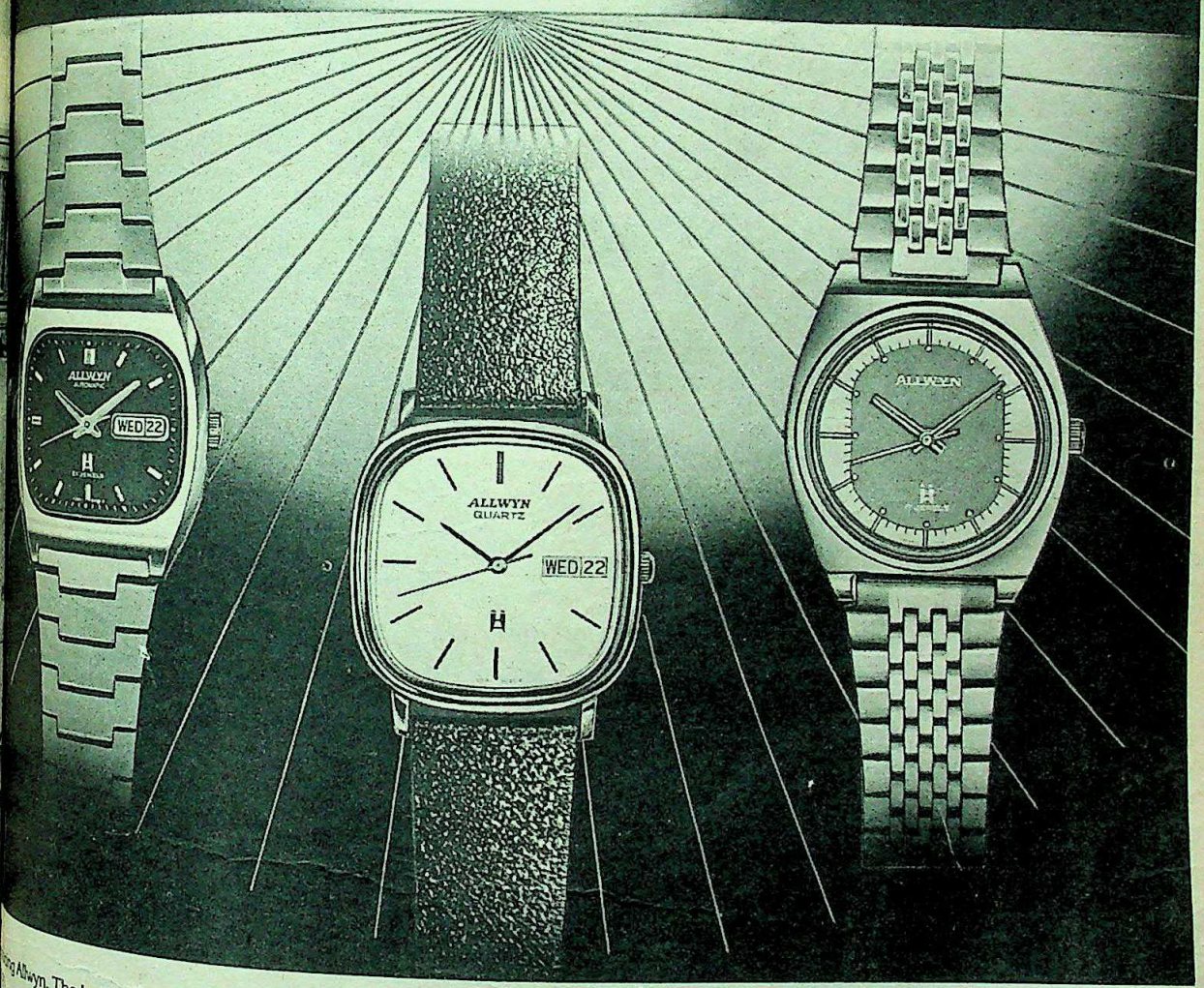

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DESERTS

Greening Of Thar

LUSH vegetation in the Thar? Groves of *jamun* trees? Mighty rivers the size of the Ganga and Indus? Seasons of monsoon-like rainfall? None of this is the fantasy it might appear at first sight. It was true in the distant past of the vast, inhospitable expanse of the Thar desert known to be one of the most inhospitable places in the world. More to the point, it can—in some measure—once again become a reality.

These are among the startling conclusions announced last month by a five-member multi-disciplinary team that has been probing the secrets of the Thar at Didwana, 220 km to the north-west of Jaipur, for the last five years. The results have come slowly but surely. Says team leader Dr Virendra Nath Misra, professor of pre-history at the Archaeology Department of Pune's Deccan College, "The desert is an excellent laboratory for the study of fluctuations in climate that have occurred since pre-historic times."

The team set up four work sites—a deep cut into a canal embankment near the town, a limestone quarry at village Amarpura, 2 km from Didwana, a well sunk into a dried lake just outside Didwana and a gravel ridge at Jayal, 50 km to the south-west of Didwana.

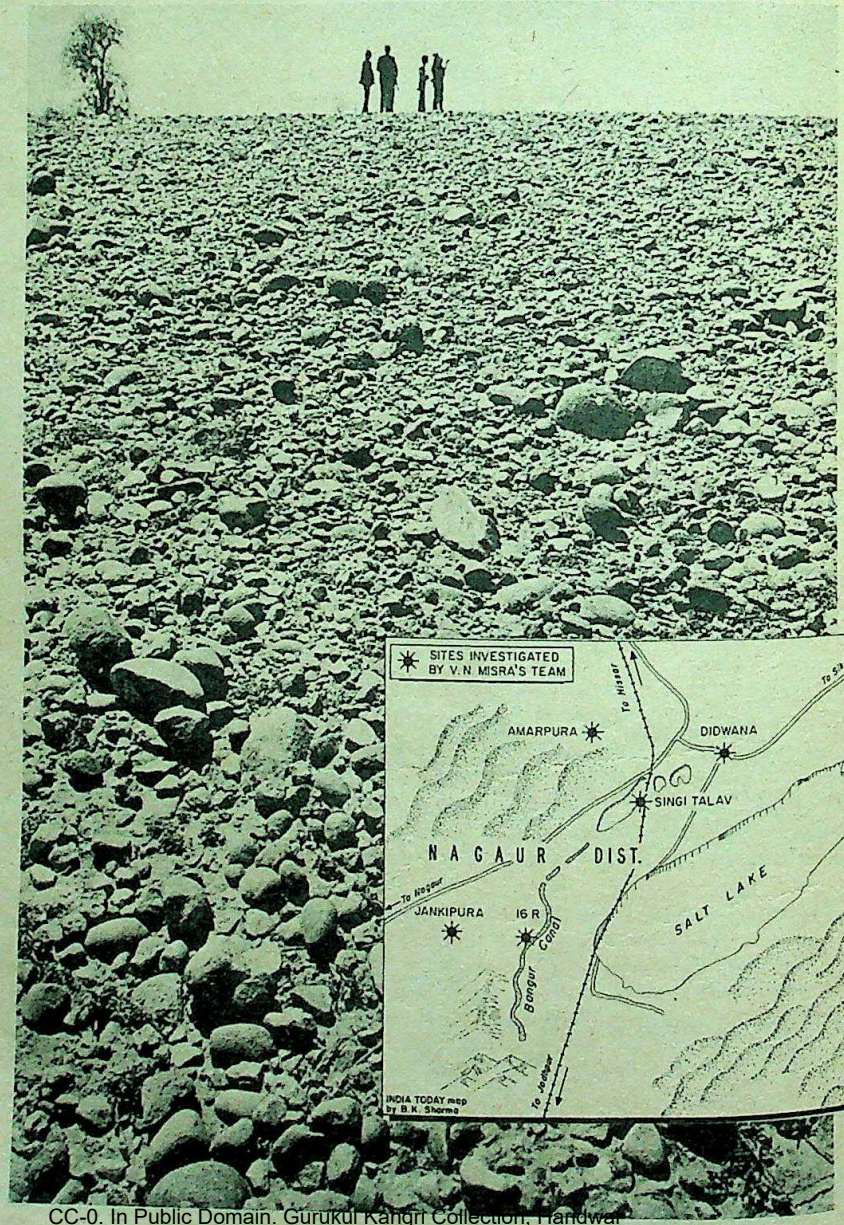
Findings: The canal cut exposed three distinct layers of sand, and stone age artefacts found confirmed that the actual desert began to build up 70,000 years ago, and that each dune layer formed after a period of relative wetness. At Amarpura, a 10-metre thick layer of highly pelletised and calcareous loam created by a once-mighty river yielded stone tools, proving that man had lived there in times of better rainfall.

If the first two sites had been archaeologically fertile, the other two were even more so. Near the bottom of the well was a metre-thick salt layer and most important, between 1.3 m and 3 m below the surface was another deposit of finely laminated black clay (locally called *kaajalia*). Said Misra: "This proves that around 7,000 years ago the area experienced a period of abundant rainfall, and the lake filled up. This is when the clayey sediments were deposited."

Palynologist M.D. Kajale of Deccan College—palynology is the study of pollen and spores whether living or fossil—went through the pollen in the clay to ... presence of several plants, trees ... including the *jamun* and an ... wth. He even found evidence of ... plant called *Cyperaceae*. If any ... was needed that the Thar was ... grim wasteland, it was found in ... ridge—once the bed of a large ... sands of stone age tools lay ... testifying to man's thriving pres...

History: Putting all this ... ether, the team—which includ... Rajaguru, environmental archae... geo-morphologist at Deccan Col... experts Dr Dharma Pal Agraw... Singhvi of the Physical ... Laboratory, Ahmedabad and sc... R.P. Dhir of the Central Arid Zo... Institute, Jodhpur—reconstru... Thar's history. One million year... before the desert formed, the ... watered by ... comparable ... Indus and ... Rainfall wa... the vegetati... half-million ... however, pow... nic movement... the river syst... great streams ... slow down a...

Then ma... entrance on t... as attested ... scores of ca... have been ... *Homo erec*... about in ... ups, hunting ... bivores ... weapons, ga... fruit. But ... struck arou... years ago ...



The Jayal ... mony to a ...

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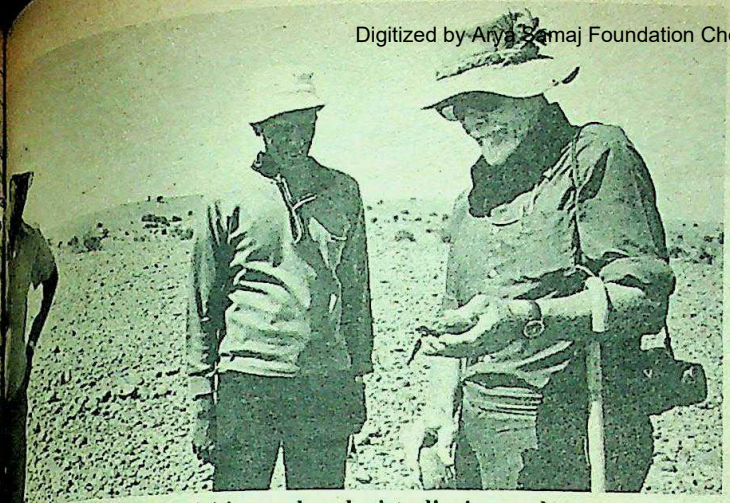

Misra and Rajaguru with visiting archaeologist: digging up desert secrets

...and the already sluggish ...shifting westward. Strong ...and silt particles from ...and deposited them in the ...true desert began to form. ...repeatedly gave way to ...the sand dunes stabilised, ...vegetation sprang back to ...during these congenial

...period of aridity ended ...ago, and the area re-...rainfall. As the vege-...its pre-desert lushness, the ...nomadic pastoralism, tend-...—a life-style that en-...The wet stretch lasted 3,000 ...semi-arid conditions set ...able to adapt to that too. ...The Thar Desert was ...climatic and hydrological ...role has been minimal. ...adapted very well to the ...."

...Nomadic tribes still in-...—among them the ...collect money, hunt small ...the open on the dunes. ...conservation instinct: ...of the handful that exist in ...of foliage for fodder, but ...so that the tree has ...its leaf cover. Misra ...can support large popu-...is helped by intensive ...the old pattern of no-...has its own in-built

...about intensive irri-...timely because the Thar ...an exploding population ...The grazing lands are ...scanty—and rare—rain-...piecemeal agriculture in ...sand dunes have stabilised ...years. This loosens ...wind erosion, adding to the ...by overgrazing. As Misra warns: "If we try to mix unirrigated agriculture and concentrated grazing, that spells doom."

The one way of greening the sands is to bring water to them in a systematic way. The ambitious Rajasthan canal's upper reaches in Ganganagar district have already transformed the desert there. Rajaguru points out: "The stabilised dunes that prevail in this region consist of mature soil and will react very well to proper irrigation." But these ideas have not yet become prevalent and work on the canal is proceeding at a pace that would put even a snail to shame. As for archaeology, India is not a signatory to the World Heritage Commission of Unesco, although Rajasthan alone holds such treasures of archaeological and geological material. Nor is there a department of archaeology in any of Rajasthan's three universities.

Warnings: Conservationists abroad hold views that reinforce the Didwana team's findings. In his book *Losing Ground,* Erik P. Eckholm points out that north-west India is the world's most densely populated arid zone. Unplanned and unirrigated cultivation on the one hand, and shrinking grazing lands on the other, says Eckholm, have seriously affected "the productivity of an arid area covering more than a fifth of India, an area larger than France". Reid Bryson and David Baerreis of the University of Wisconsin, USA, say that the dense pall of dust annually covering north-west India and eastern Pakistan has led to a discernible fall in the area's rainfall.

Rajasthan has been experiencing severe drought for the last two and a half years and has witnessed large-scale migrations of livestock out of the state. Asserts Agrawal: "Our entire ecological consciousness is topsy-turvy. We should treat environment not as an entity but as a process." Modern man may yet live in the Thar as his ancestors did long ago—leading a comfortable existence alongside life-giving rivers.

—CHAITANYA KALBAG

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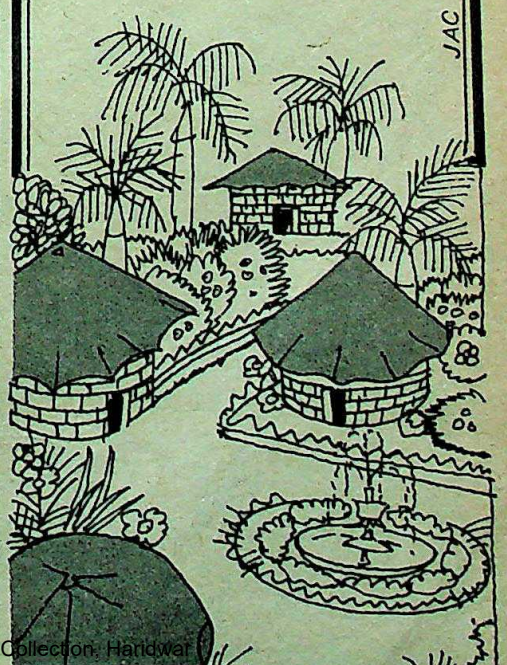

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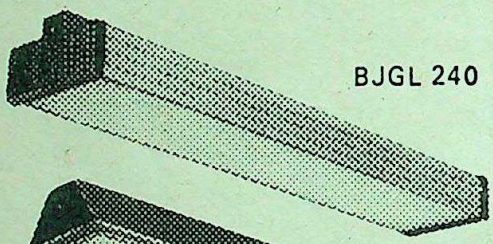

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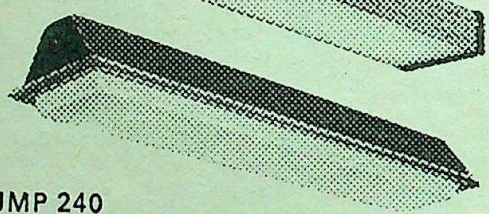

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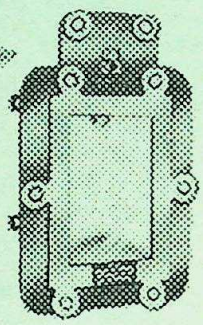

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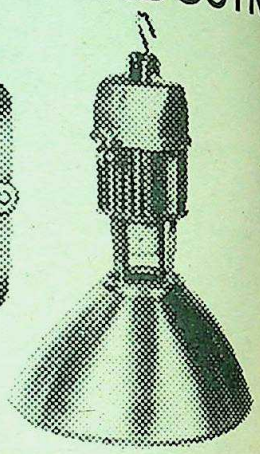

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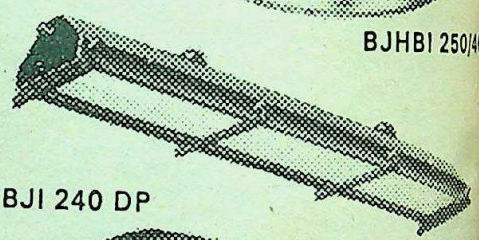

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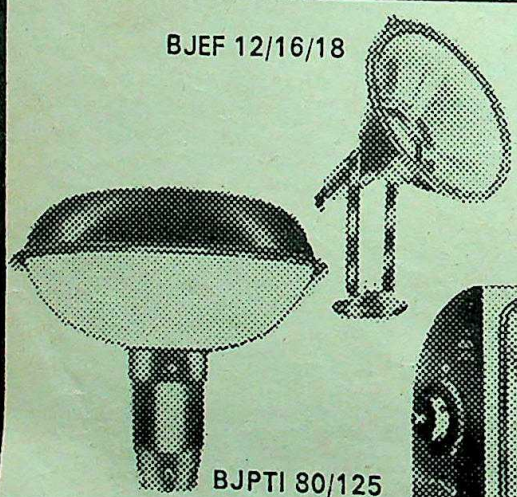

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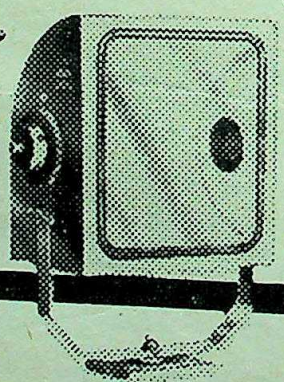

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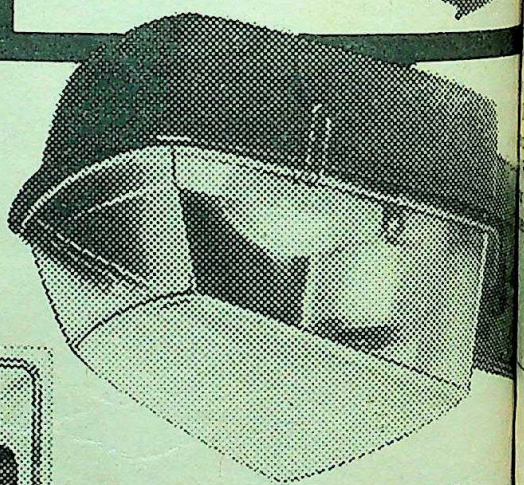

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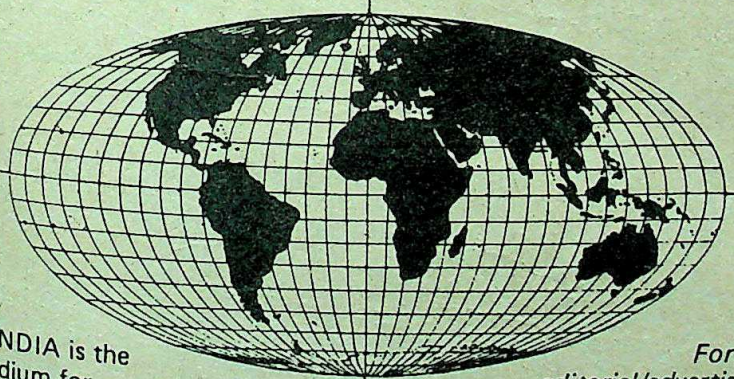

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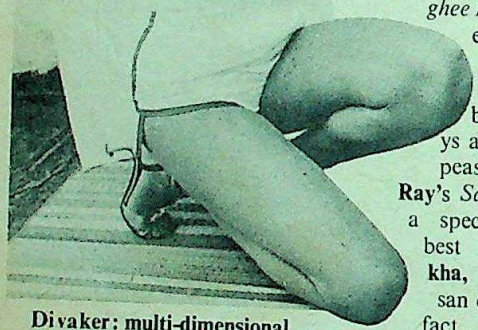
■ All Bombay models have stars in their eyes—film stars, that is. But few get there and fewer still have the kind of vital statistics that **Deepti Divaker**, 22, flaunts. For starters, a 35-24-35 figure that, coupled with unusual poise and confidence, earned her the Miss India title in last year's *Femina* contest. That isn't all. Under that elegantly-upholstered exterior is a rare hybrid: painter, writer,



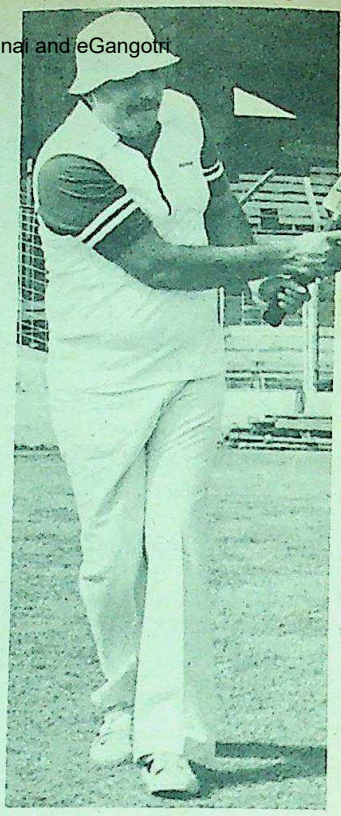
Divaker: multi-dimensional

classical dancer, architect and fashion model, all struggling to get out at the same time.

Just back from Britain and an unsuccessful bid for the Miss World title, Divaker is currently back at her drawing board in Bangalore where she is studying architecture. But not for long. Her first priority is to recover the money she spent for her London trip. "I spent Rs 12,000 on that trip from my own pocket. *Femina* only paid for my return ticket," she drawls, "I'm determined to recover the money from dancing, modelling, and acting." Next stop: Bombay, where she intends to take the film industry by hurricane. And then: the world. "I want to be multi-dimensional," she insists, "I want to try my hand at everything. What I want while I'm still young is fame, lots of it, and money too." That figures.

■ With two big guns of the Bombay film industry on the jury that decided the 29th national film awards last fortnight, there were rumours that the commercial entertainer might achieve respectability by winning a laurel. However, grand old actor **Ashok Kumar**, chairman of the feature film jury—his other Bombay colleague was producer-director **B.R. Chopra**—had other, and better ideas and the Swaran Kamal for the best feature went to *Dakhal,* the creation of young Bengali director **Gautam Ghose.**

The other awards are less of a surprise. **Aparna Sen** received the prize for best direction for the film *36 Chowringhee Lane,* **Om Puri,** the exploited peasant of Shyam Bengal's *Arohan,* was best actor—he plays a similar exploited peasant in **Satyajit Ray**'s *Sadgati,* which got a special jury award, best actress was **Rekha,** the poetic courtesan of *Umrao Jaan.* In fact, **Muzaffar Ali**'s period piece, set in ceremonious Lucknow, walked away with four awards—best actress, best playback singer (**Asha Bhonsle**), best music director (**Khayyam**) and best art direction.



Rao: donkey drops

■ Heat does strange things to people. With the mercury rising above 36 degrees in Bangalore, Karnataka Chief Minister **R. Gundu Rao** took cricket bat in hand and led a motley team of legislators, ministers and close friends—including bosom buddy **F.M. Khan**—out on to the field to confront the High Court chief justice's eleven. Decked out in sharply creased flannels, his belly [illegible] hind a [illegible] shirt, Rao [illegible] over for a few [illegible] before wilting away [illegible] his team-mates [illegible] the other end. C[illegible] **Chandrashekhar** [illegible] before he, too, str[illegible] the cool of the pa[illegible]

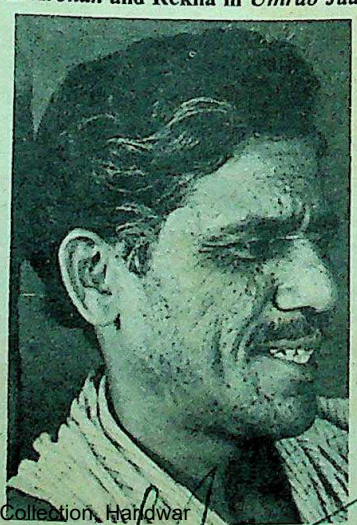
State Finance **Veerappa Moily** and their duty valiantly master left, but even justice's men manag[illegible] 144 runs. In reply [illegible] huffing and puffing [illegible] could score only 12[illegible] probably his governm[illegible] performance.

SIGN POS[illegible]

■ **Retired:** Acerb[illegible] leader Chaudhary Ch[illegible] 80, who annou[illegible] retirement from politics". However later, Singh was involved in sacking leaders from the p[illegible] orchestrating the resurrection in hist[illegible]

■ **Convicted:** Ad[illegible] 35, son of Moharam[illegible] found guilty of American Express [illegible] (Rs 21.9 lakh) and explosive devices on in Miami. Shah attempted to pa[illegible] shipment of scrap video cassettes and d[illegible] blow up the evid[illegible] sentence is pending.

(From left) Sen; Om Puri in *Arohan* and Rekha in *Umrao Jaan*: winning performances



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INDIA TODAY
MAY 15, 1982
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THE COMPLETE NEWSMAGAZINE

NO-WAR PACT

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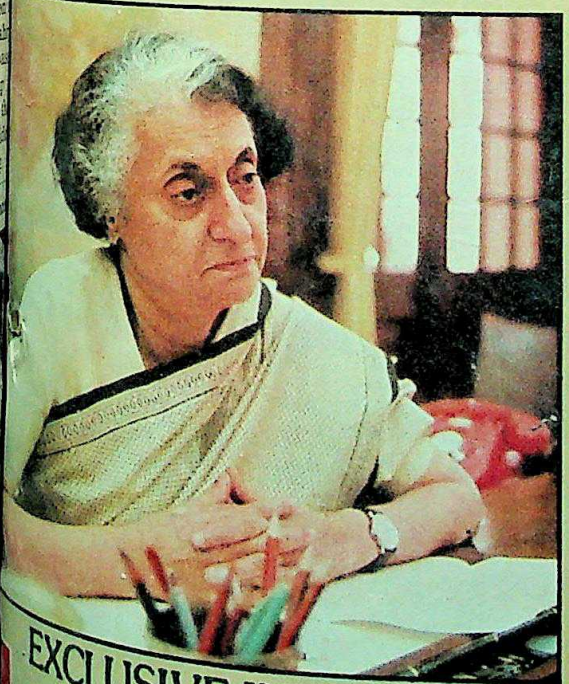

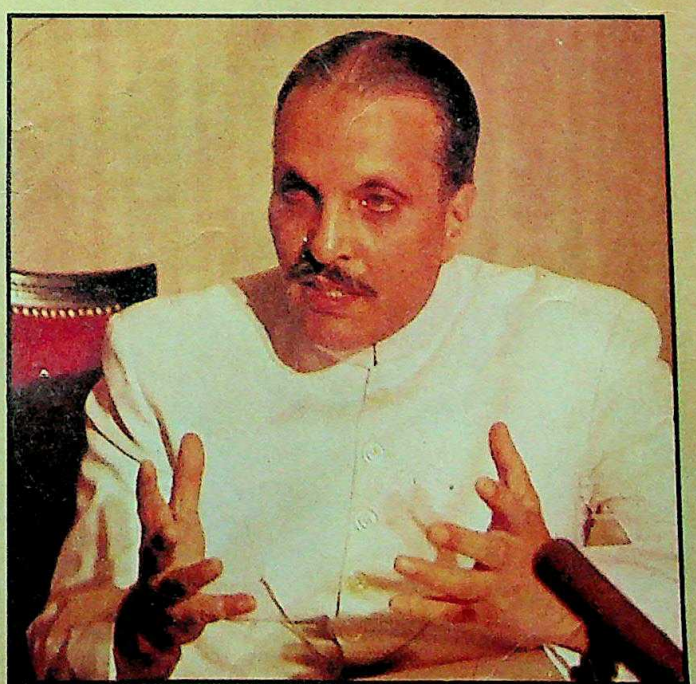

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH PAKISTAN'S ZIA-UL-HAQ

ALSO

INDIA'S ARTFUL FORGER

INVESTIGATION: OPERATION LAND-GRAB

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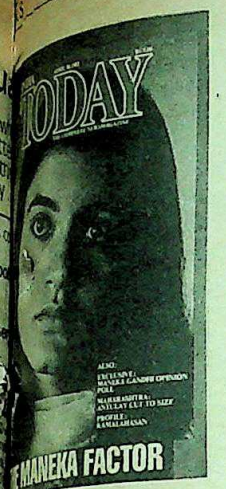

...PS AHEAD

...neka Factor" (April 30) gave ...e history of the prime minister's ...ghter-in-law. Though it is too ...y how far Maneka's ambitions ...ed, it is quite clear that she had ...itability of her ouster from 1 ...Road and prepared well for ...s that she learnt well Sanjay ...otto of thinking four steps

R.V. Venkataraman

...le was not worth the paper it ...n. Such unnecessary focus on ...gs by the national press has ...martyrdom to both Maneka ...Ahmed. And as the long-...dow and the faithful follower, ...ow ride the crest of popular ...d one knows how effective that ...Articles like this help project and ...this image.

Rizwana Akhtar

...Gandhi should reconsider her ...ment of her daughter-in-law. ...e is still very much the bereaved ...her actions should be treated ...standing and sympathy, not ...d rejection.

D.R. Shukla

...that the Sanjay charisma has ...imated. After almost two years ...there are still people who are ...k the wrath of the High Com-...e sake of his widow. This cannot ...phancy.

H.R. Sridhara

...Y ASSUMPTIONS

...special feature, "The Battle ...pril 30) my name has been men-...intrigued by the preoccupation, ...the article, with the involved ...onships of Indian families. I did not think that this could possibly interest your readers. As for the inaccuracy of the statement about my being "the biggest fund raiser" for the BJP, I sorely wish it were so, both for my own sake as also for my party's. However, I am perfectly content to leave you with the illusions of your assumptions.

New Delhi *Jaswant Singh MP*

FAMILY OF PLANTS

In the article, "Greening of Thar" (April 30) a reference is made to a marsh plant called "Cyperaceae". There is no plant by this name but there is a family of plants by that name which includes 3,500 species.

Madras *Uttam Padukone*

HEIR-SPLITTING

If the "Tremors of Tension" (April 15) continue in the Congress(I), then we can look forward to some raucous heir-splitting.

Ahmedabad *Rajendra Balge*

■ The Mrs Gandhi-Maneka episode was reviewed in the right perspective. That the rift in the Gandhi family has synchronised with the tremors of tension in the Congress(I) may lead people to believe that the move made by pro-Maneka elements is a calculated one by those who want to wean away the dissatisfied and disillusioned members in the rank and file of the Congress(I).

Calcutta *Pinaki Chakraborty*

■ Obviously Mrs Gandhi is incapable of controlling the corrupt members of her party. I wonder how long we will have to suffer at the hands of this ruthless ruling party without any effective opposition.

Jambaran *K.S. Ganapathy Subramanyam*

■ The picture that emerges of the Congress(I) is a depressing one. It seems that Mrs Gandhi has deliberately decimated the party so that she can claim at an opportune moment that political systems are unworkable in India and then she can rule through the bureaucracy only. But whatever her motives are, the course she is following, that of accumulating all the power solely around her, is a dangerous one. It never does to put all the eggs into one basket.

Calcutta *Kumari Susrita*

DEFENDING BASU

In a report on West Bengal ("Realigning the Ranks", April 15) Sumanta Sen has referred to a so-called meeting of the CPI-M party legislators where the chief minister is quoted as saying: "Members of the RSP and the Forward Bloc may seek to trouble ministers belonging to our party and you should be prepared to tackle them." Then the

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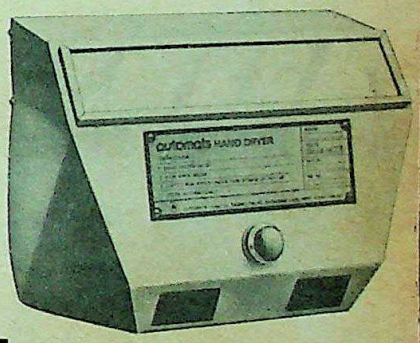

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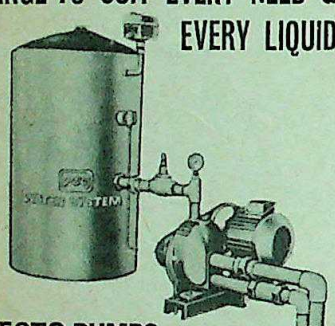

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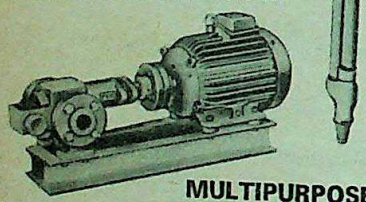

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author has commented: "At no point during the last five years had Basu so openly asked his partymen to beware of not only the Opposition but also those in the Front itself."

The report is totally untrue. The chief minister had no separate meeting with his party legislators during the current session of the Assembly. The speech attributed to him is absolutely baseless and he has never made any such statement anywhere. This correspondent should have checked his facts with the chief minister.

Calcutta *Adhir Chakravarty,*
Press and Information Advisor,
Government of West Bengal

Sumanta Sen replies:

I stick by my report which is neither "untrue" nor "baseless". It is interesting to note that while Adhir Chakravarty chose to contradict the INDIA TODAY *report, he has not done so in the case of other newspapers, including* The Times of India, *which have also published the report. As for his suggestion that I should have checked with the chief minister, Chakravarty should know that this is not necessary when a newsman gets a story from a reliable source who has not let him down in the past.*

LICENCE OF POWER

How can the publication of fully documented corruption charges against the chief minister of J & K be called "Literary Licence" (April 15)? What the author failed to mention was that on the day the pamphlet was released in Srinagar, officers of the state Government's Information Department made a swoop on all the bookstores in the valley and confiscated all available copies. The storekeepers were threatened with dire consequences if they sold any copies—all this without any formal ban. Is this not the licence of power?

Srinagar *Nazir Ahmed*

SHOCKING REVELATION

The article "Down at the Heel" (April 15) was a shocking revelation of TAFCO's poor performance. Even residents of Kanpur were unaware of the extent of the losses. The only thing more shocking was the author's deplorable knowledge of geography. Kanpur's industrial complex is on the banks of the Ganga, not the Gomti.

Kanpur *Pavan Srivastava*

TAKEN FOR A RIDE

In "From Russia With Verve" (April 15) the author mentions "the unilateral military build-up by the US in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf". What he fails to mention are the string of Soviet naval bases in the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf. The Soviet Union also has berthing fa... Indian ports: Bombay, Marmu... Vishakhapatnam. In comparison... has only one base in Diego Garc... examines the situation the concl... India, the USSR's only ally in So... apart from Vietnam, has really be... for a ride is inevitable.

Calcutta M...

CIVILISE THE YOUTH

I think the Festival of In... have been exhibited in this coun... A Civilisation", April 15). Afte... urban youth are pitifully lacking i... ledge of their own civilisation.

Patiala Neel...

■ It is commendable that INDI... was able to send Raghu Rai to take... photographs of the Festival. The ... has again proved its commitment... professionalised journalism.

Sadar N.K...

SOURCE OF THE PROBLEM

In the report of the Fifth Tri... author instead of suggesting any... crete has compiled the "Hues An... (April 15) of the artists. It would h... more beneficial if he had concentra... the source of the problem—the La... Akademi.

Chandigarh

MISUNDERSTANDING

In a letter to INDIA TODAY (A... Kunga Wangchuk of Gangtok has ... that "the Tibetans are interested i... taining the *status quo* in Sikkim" ... statement's only purpose is to cre... understanding. The Tibetans in ... Sikkim have never indulged in loco... and have no intention of doing s... future. Moreover, there is no truth ... statement that Tibetans have create... in Bhutan and Nepal.

Gangtok *Nyima...*
Representative o...
Holiness the Dalai...

The article, "Does Moses ... (March 31) had some wrong in... The man who first voiced the M... Kashmir theory, as well as the ... Kashmir one, was G. Ahmed of the ... sect in the 1920s. Professor F.M. ... who is now trying to take credit o... have been born then. *Iftikhar...*

Srinagar

Rabi Das is the editor of *Pra...* not the *Prajabani* as mentioned in ... "Peeking Order" (April 30). *Hari Prakash...*

Cuttack

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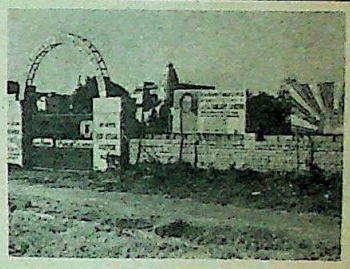
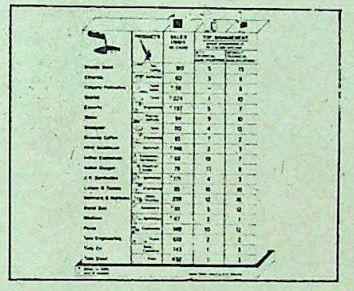
COVER STORY: The optimism was tragically short-lived. Barely months after India and Pakistan reached tentative accord on the possibility of a no-war pact, leaders of the two countries were back at each other's throats for another bout of verbal sparring, pushing the no-war talks tantalisingly out of reach. What does the average Pakistani feel about the issue? An interview with General Zia-ul-Haq and an on-the-spot report. **Page: 54**

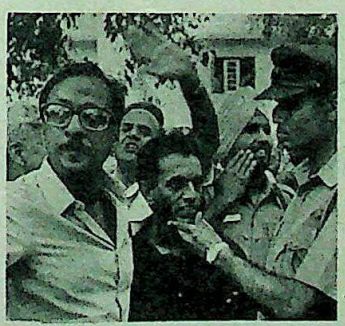
INVESTIGATION: With its housing shortage and ample supply of black money Delhi provides an ideal climate for land sharks who are making their fortunes at the Government's expense. More than 1,000 acres of public land valued at Rs 70 crore have been illegally appropriated by property racketeers and sold at fabulous prices. An investigation of the growing land-grab scandal in the capital. **Page: 76**





ECONOMY AND INDUSTRY: Although India has made remarkable strides in industrial development, compared to Japan the country still lags behind—especially in the crucial areas of quality and innovation. A major factor which is holding India back is the low value placed on technical expertise. A survey of the top management level of ten big companies to describe this detrimental bias against managers with technical and scientific backgrounds. **Page: 86**

SPECIAL FEATURE: For the last 25 years a small group of dedicated voluntary workers based in Ahmedabad has devoted its efforts to rehabilitating convicts and the handicapped, providing health care and disaster relief. Although the organisation, the Sadvichar Parivar, has shunned publicity it is well-known throughout Gujarat and has earned a reputation for genuinely selfless service, sometimes under extremely difficult circumstances. **Page: 104**



SPECIAL REPORT: Last fortnight an unknown young man, Ram Narayan Kumar, forced his way into an MP's flat in Delhi. While his attempt to hold the MP hostage was foiled he did succeed in capturing the headlines. Was his exploit really intended to focus attention on exploited coal miners in Madhya Pradesh as he claimed or was his bid for instant martyrdom a publicity stunt? INDIA TODAY probes Kumar's past and the cause he has espoused. **Page: 118**

THE ARTS: Six years ago the National Museum in New Delhi gleefully pounced on a prize find—an illustrated manuscript called the *Jaur Gita Govinda* believed to be 400 years old. But recently the authenticity of the manuscript has been called into question from a particularly embarrassing quarter—the man who says he painted it. A report on the controversy which has put the reputations of some of the country's most renowned art historians on the line. **Page: 128**

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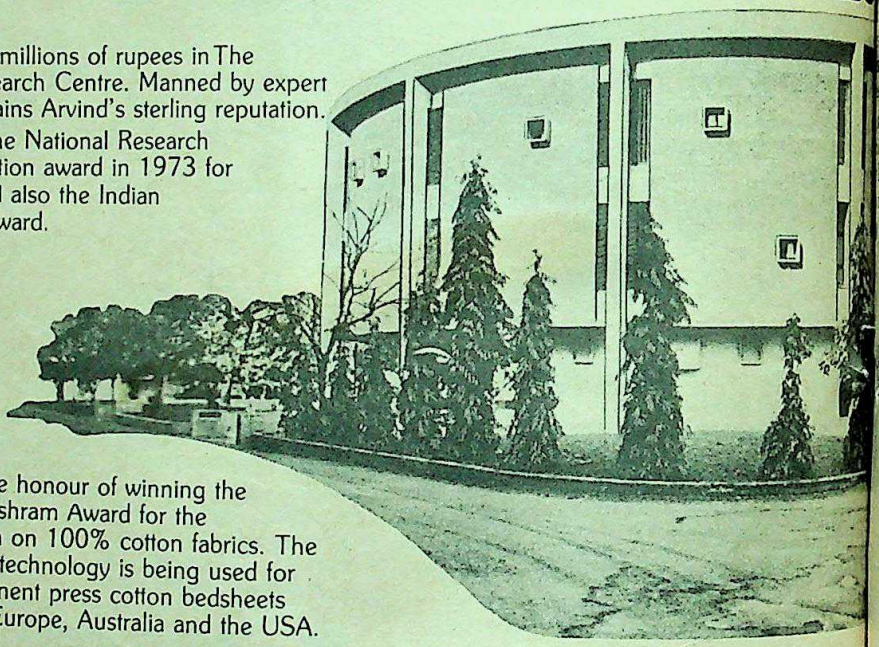

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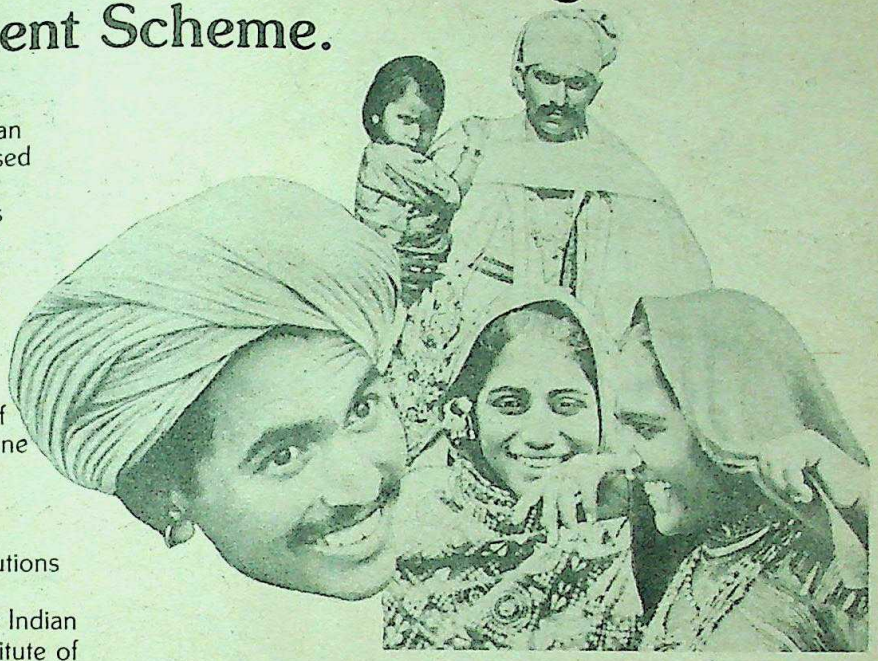

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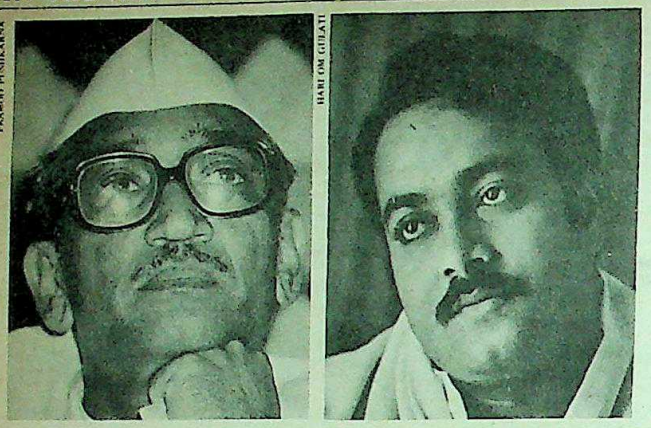

Bahuguna (left) and Singh: foregone conclusion?

STRATEGY IN GARHWAL

HELICOPTERS and VIPs are being studiously kept away from Garhwal by the Congress(I) during the Assembly elections this time. The electorate in this hilly region wasn't impressed by all the pomp and show displayed by the ruling party last year. Congress(I) also seems to have resigned itself to the victory of Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna in the Lok Sabha by-election from this constituency later this month. The Central leadership has quietly passed on the campaign to the state unit of the party which in turn has passed it on to the state Youth Congress. Uttar Pradesh Youth Congress President Sanjay Singh has been camping out in the constituency along with scores of young party colleagues for the past three weeks. Low key, door-to-door campaigns with local grass roots level leaders appears to be the main strategy.

If Bahuguna wins, the Central leaders can conveniently wash their hands off the defeat by saying they had not bothered much about it. If the Congress(I) does manage to romp home, it will be a pleasant surprise for the party managers in Delhi as well as the candidate, Chandra Mohan Singh Negi, Uttar Pradesh's minister for hill development. On test also is the organising skill of Sanjay Singh. Once the right hand man of the late Sanjay Gandhi in Uttar Pradesh, Singh played a key role in ensuring the victory of all Congress(I) candidates in the state Rajya Sabha poll.

ASIAD'S 'COLOURFUL' DELAY

THE IX Asiad is coming and we are getting ready, reads the message of the half-page advertisements in the dailies. But arrangements are still far from complete. With the games just six months away, the tickets for the Asiad—the largest spectacle of sport in Asia held once every four years—have still to be printed to be sold overseas and at home. The problem lies in the indecision of the organisers, who are still debating what colours the various tickets should be.

SIGNALLING THE SOVIETS

THE Soviet Union's recent offer to Pakistan to help them set up a tractor factory and establish more steel mills, and the hobnobbing of Soviet diplomats with Pakistanis in some world capitals, has greatly annoyed Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. It is not so much the uncooperative attitude of the Communist Party of India (CPI), which follows the Moscow lines, but the Soviet attempts to get closer to Pakistan that have caused suspicion and indignation in New Delhi. A top source in South Block said that Soviet attempts to woo Pakistan are designed to pinprick New Delhi and to get Mrs Gandhi to yield to their dictates. Mrs G has deliberately announced recently that she was proposing both Washington and Moscow, just to signal to the Soviets t is not one to be pressured.

MiG HUNTING

PERSISTENT reports that India may be considering pu of the latest MiG variants, the MiG-27 and Mi-29, s have been confirmed. A batch of Indian Air Force fighter who have been flying MiGs are currently in the Soviet Unio three-month training programme with the new aircraft. Sou that the training will mainly be on the MiG-27 Flogger-D strike aircraft; but they will also test-fly the MiG-29 which its initial production stages. The sources say that Indi eventually settle only for the MiG-27 which has the advan being able to operate from unprepared or under-prepared ru

TRAVAILS OF AN EXILE

LALDENGA, leader of the outlawed Mizo National Fro set up his new home in a small town in West Germa outside Frankfurt, according to sources. Laldenga, who wa to leave the country last fortnight after six years of fr negotiations over the prickly Mizo problem, spent two d London before proceeding to Frankfurt. He is no stranger country and had in fact lived there in exile before being calle to India by the Government. Initially, the Indian Governme left out Britain and West Germany from the list of countries passport permitted him to visit, but later changed its mi endorsed them on the document. However, there are indica that Laldenga might finally settle down closer to his hom Sources say that he has close connections with Ba President General Ershad and he could possibly return t an ideal base from where he can resume his former acti

GOING GREAT GUNS

THE HIRSUTE Swami Dhirendra Brahmachari seems t a finger in every pie, particularly in Jammu, the site opulent ashram. He has now added another acquisition to his the form of a gun manufacturing firm. Now, over a dozen

Swami Dhirendra: finger in every pie

have, in a memorandum, demanded an inquiry into the grant of a gun manufacturing licence to the firm. According memorandum Brahmachari secured the ownership of the based firm and then applied to the Union Home Ministry the production of the factory increased to 3,000 guns a

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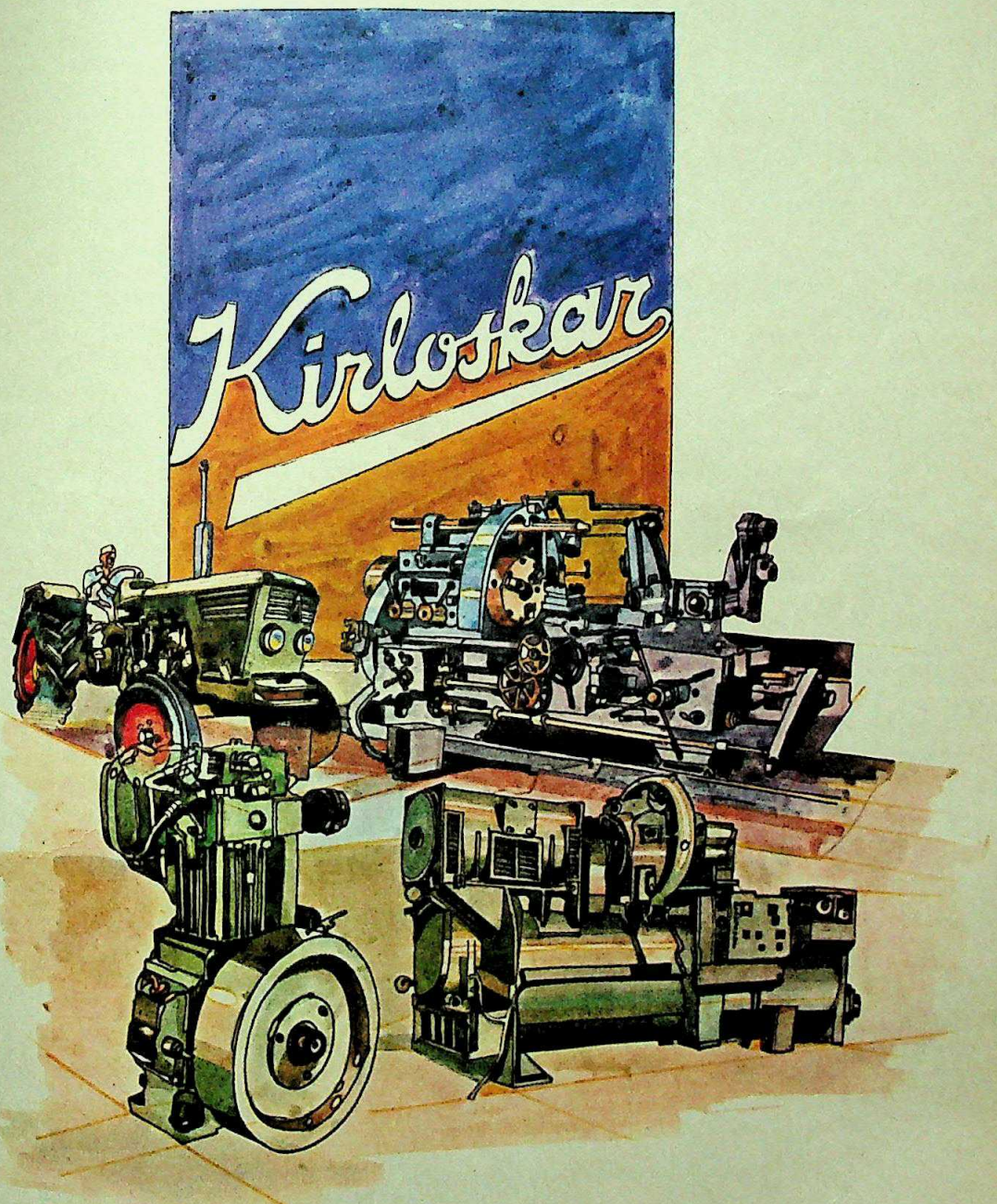

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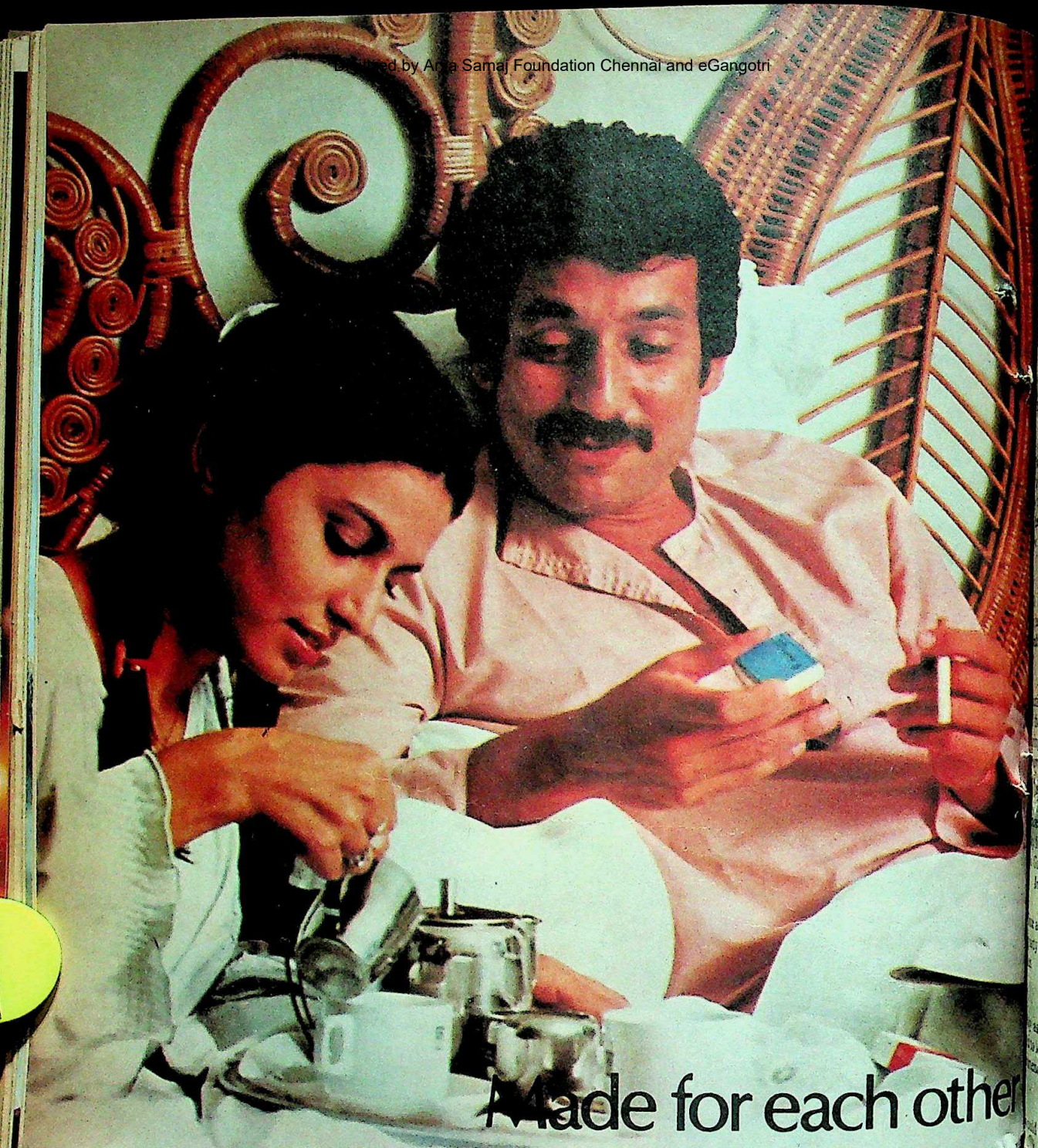

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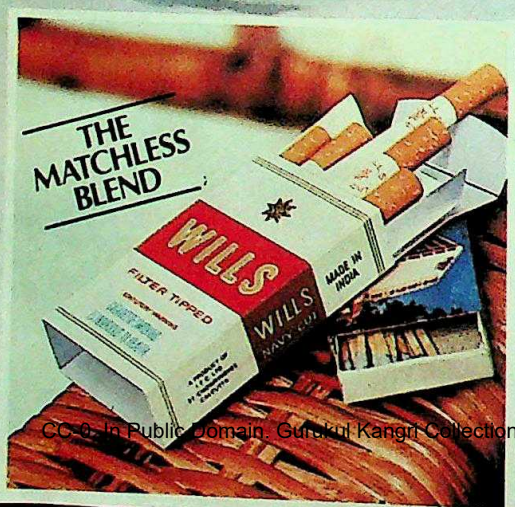

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...d all the films I had seen (Satyajit Ray's) *Sadgati* deserved the award for the

—Aparna Sen in Sunday Observer

...should be in a position to decide our future here without having to go to Delhi ...appoint a clerk in a taluk office.

—Former Andhra Pradesh minister Bhaskar Rao in The Hindu

...rofessing one's religion is branded as extremism I will cherish to be an

—Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale addressing a congregation in Delhi

...prove that politics is the last resort of a gentleman because only a gentleman ...ork with devotion and sincerity to remove the evils plaguing society.

—N.T. Rama Rao in Blitz

...poor child Maneka has lost her spirit. She ...me for a job with the paper. I told her ...that although I would have liked to have ...a job, her mother-in-law would have to ...first.

—Khushwant Singh in Society

...not ask about that foolish man Raj ...he has a deranged mind. As long as he was ...he was all right; he has gone mad now.

—Charan Singh in Sunday

...ically no security arrangements existed. ...employees would be playing cards not ...ng the lunch hours but even after it.

...ry by one of the four alleged bank robbers on Delhi bank security

...the press did not cooperate it was ...for the radio and TV to step in.

...Gandhi in an interview with students of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication

I think there is a mix up of your papers, sir. It says, "describe an isosceles triangle with diagram..." This must be your son's next week's exam paper.

...actors have invaded the world of politics and threaten to take it over, the ...must pay them back in the same coin by turning themselves into actors and

—S. Nihal Singh in The Indian Express

...as they are with feathering their own nests they (legislators) cannot be ...look after the interests of the populace. After all, drunks just do not make ...makers.

—N.C. Menon in The Hindustan Times

...even sweep and wipe the floor if the people ask me.

—Morarji Desai at a meet the press programme

...technicolour kite floating in a vast blue sky, the thread cut off.

—Subramaniam Swamy described in Current

...forgotten how to make small films so maybe I'll work as an assistant to ...director and learn how to make small films.

—Film director Manmohan Desai in Bombay

...advocates could agitate for appointment of more judges to clear the ...cases.

...Justice Y.V. Chandrachud's jocular comment on the Supreme Court advocates' threatened strike.

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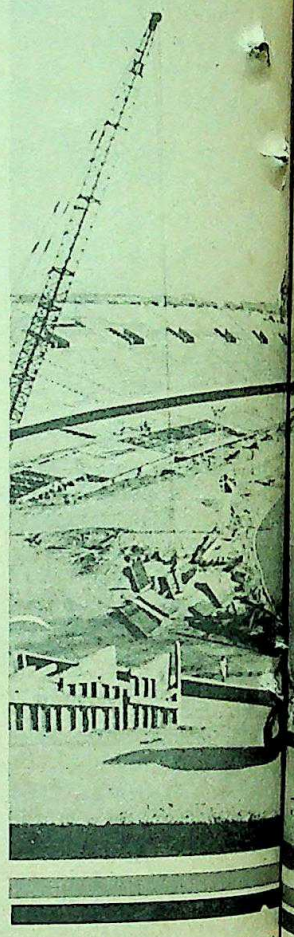

centres in the world. An effort w… tribute to the youth of India, bec… gives them wonderful sports faci…

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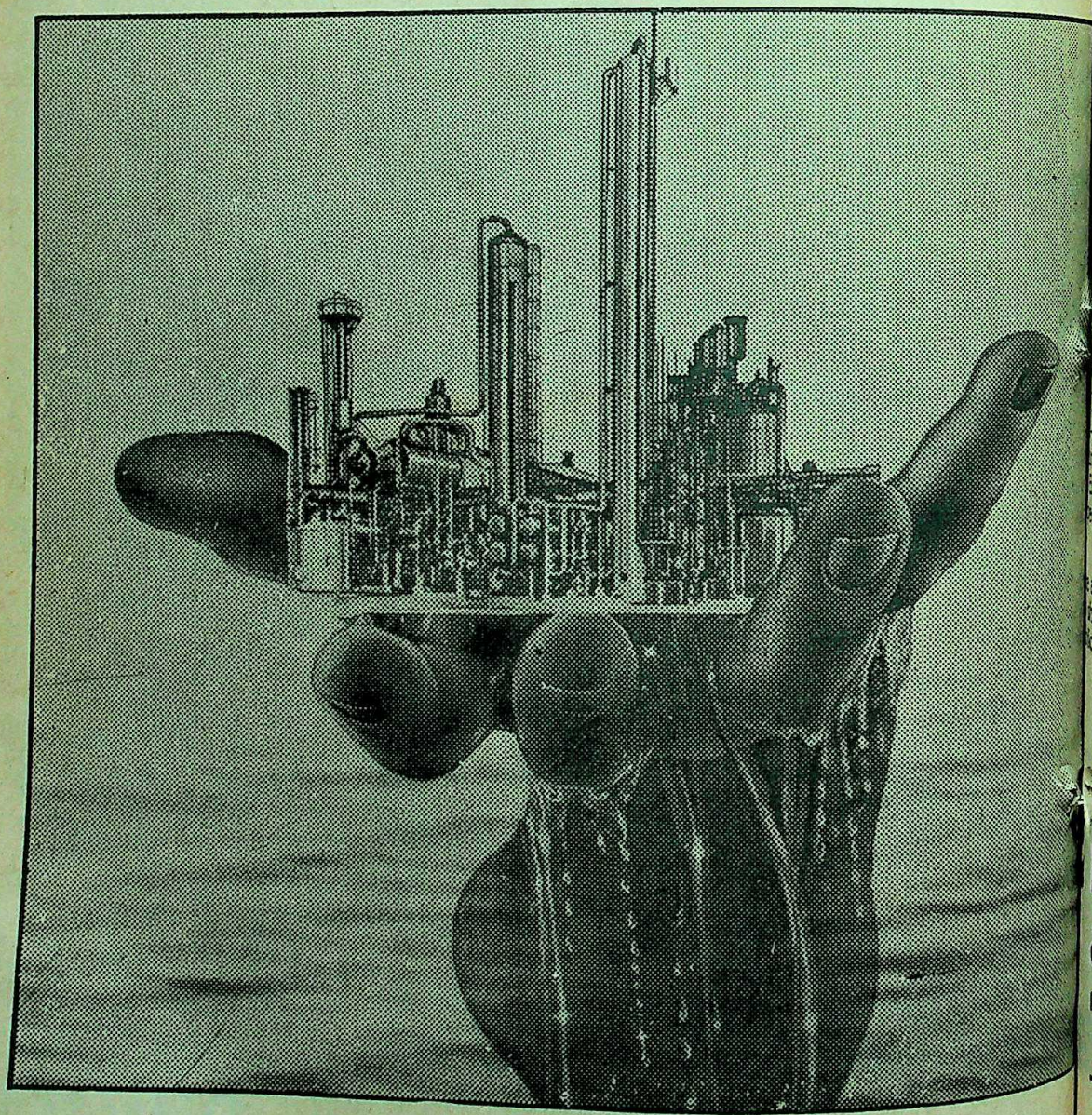

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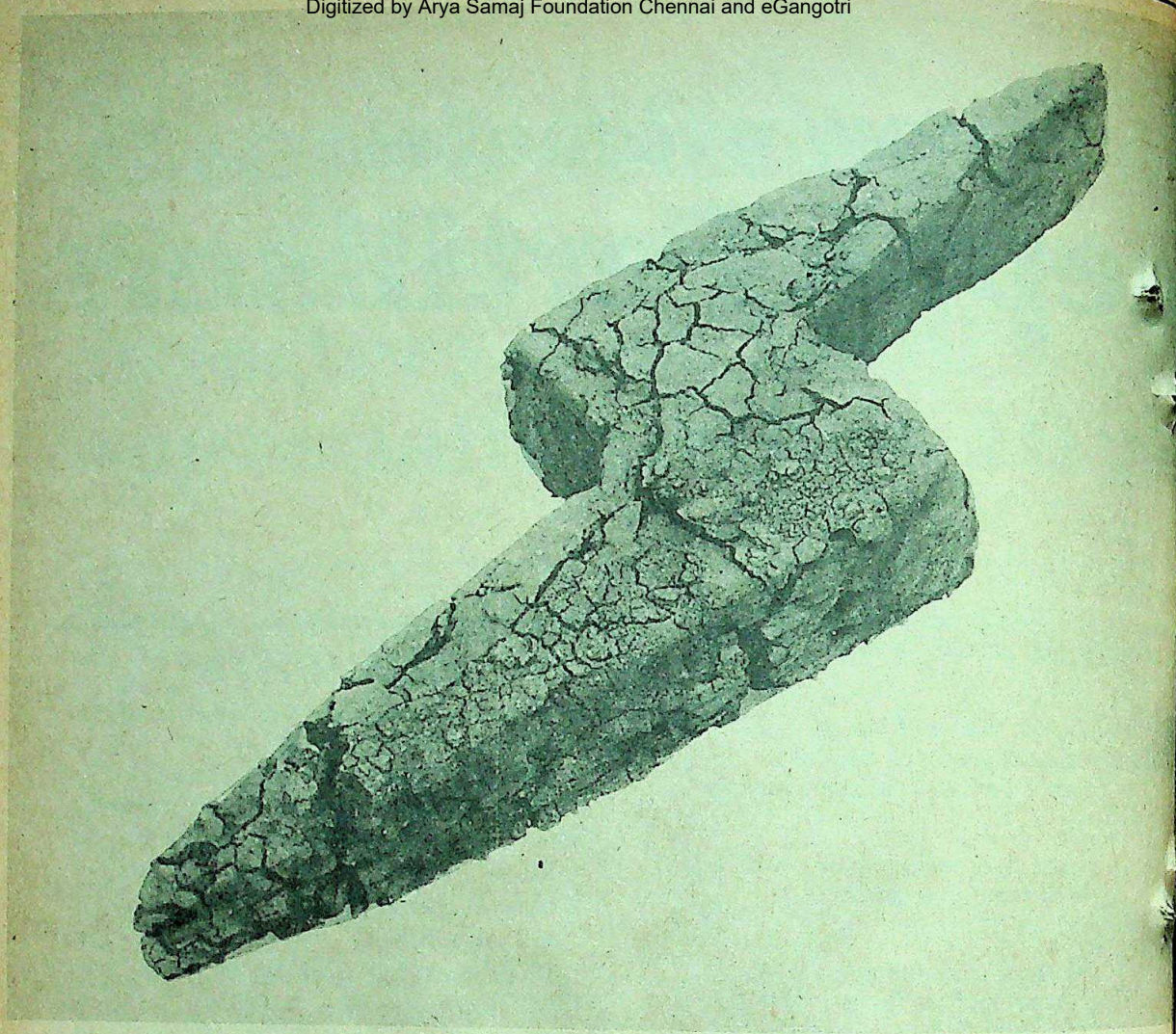

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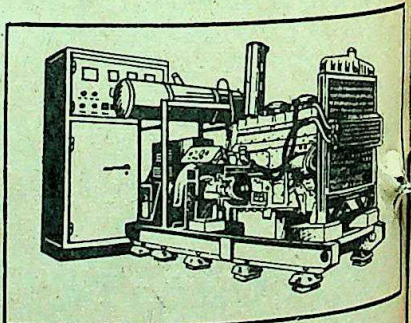

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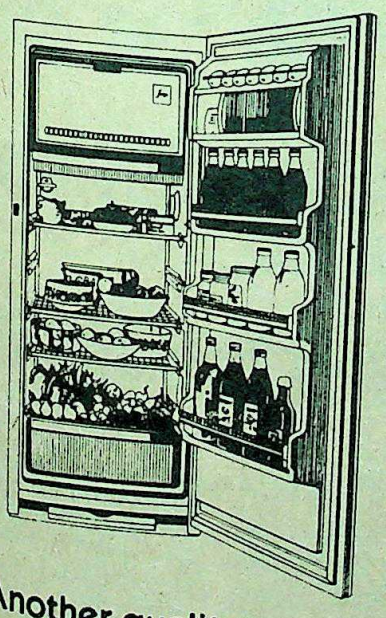

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STATE ELECTIONS

Confusion Confounded

THE BANNERS were ready, the slogans were being tried out in practised throats, the jeeps were revving up, and the posters were stacked up. It was election time again in the world's largest democracy and more than 6,200 persons had demonstrated their faith in the electoral process by filing nomination papers for the 607 assembly seats in four states and six Lok Sabha seats whose representatives would be decided on May 19. Haryana led West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh and Kerala in the deluge of hopefuls —more than 3,000 nominations had been filed for 90 seats.

The tedious process of selection of party nominees was instructive, in that it revealed the seething discontent in almost every political party. Hardly had the Congress(I), the Lok Dal and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) finalised their candidate lists, than party leaders found to their chagrin an equal number of frustrated party members filing their papers as rebel candidates. The Congress(I) was riven with myriad factions, and the opposition parties were busy eroding each other's base.

Caste considerations and money power, as always, played an important role in the selection. Party offices were swamped by over 15,000 applications. Candidates and their supporters thronged the four state bhavans in the capital—according to one estimate, 5,000 people jostled for 500 beds. Middlemen had a field day. And when the final lists were announced, the leaders were accused of ignoring genuine interests by those who had been denied tickets.

Chaotic State: The Opposition was involved in another kind of farce. The Lok Dal and the BJP managed to forge an alliance, but the Congress(S), the Janata Party, Jagjivan Ram's Congress(J) and H.N. Bahuguna's Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) dithered. The Janata Party could not even start its parliamentary board meeting to finalise its candidates because it had been betrayed by a section of the Opposition and by the Congress(I) in West Bengal.

This chaotic state of affairs —factionalism within the ruling party and internecine warfare in the Opposition—delayed the filing of nomination papers until the last day. Said Atal Behari Vajpayee, BJP president: "We in the Opposition must decide once and for all whether we are enemies of each other or whether the Congress(I) is our common enemy. Only this decision can ensure our credibility in the elections and the selection of candidates will then become a minor problem."

Ironically, while party leaders were criticising each other in Delhi, state leaders had other ideas. For example, while Sharad Pawar and P.R. Das Munshi of the Congress(S) and Chandra Shekhar and Madhu Dandavate of the Janata Party talked about a united struggle against Mrs Gandhi's authoritarian rule, party representatives in Kerala and West Bengal were discussing seat adjustments with Mrs Gandhi's cabinet colleagues. Said a dejected Janata Party leader: "With this ... politics, selecting candidates will ... smooth going."

Application Deluge: Haryana ... problems for all parties. It is the ... where the chances of the Congress(... Opposition, in effect the Lok D... liance, are equal, and both gro... flooded with applications. The Co... headquarters received more tha... which had bypassed ... election committee. L... Chairman Charan Sing... screen 3,000 aspirants ... ing 500 from the BJP.

The Congress(I) ... ship set the selection tre... it denied tickets to 27 ... Haryana MLAs in the ... Assembly, including ... ters and chairmen of ... public sector organ... among them Home ... K.L. Poswal and assem... aker Colonel Ram Sing... joined the Congress(I) ... gust. Said a memb... Congress Parliamentary ... (I) (CPB-I): "In Haryana ... mum weightage was g... candidate's chances of ... followed by his image ... yalty to the party." Acc... ly, over 60 of the pr... candidates are new fa... the eight original Con... were renominated, but ... of the 43 defectors fr... Janata Party got the n...

Though Congress(... tionaries deny it, it is ... that the high comm... guided by a detailed ... each candidate compi... telligence agencies, ... computerised prospects. ... candidates staked claims to a se... CPB(I) considered only four or five ... was five hours in the making—Raj ... approved every name—and reveale... to bring together all the non-Jat ... against the Lok Dal. The majority ... candidates do not belong to the gr... by Chief Minister Bhajan Lal, ... Agriculture Minister Rao Birend... and former defence minister Bansi ... 20 seats have been given to the Ja...

Choices: Even before the sele... begun, Mrs Gandhi had made it clear

> **"We have selected the winning candidates. The Congress(I) is full of strength and the people are solidly behind it."**
>
> **Rajiv Gandhi at Delhi Youth Congress(I) Convention on April 24.**

PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

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...uld be her choice, leaving 40 to ...mended by state leaders including ...Congress Committee(I) (PCC-I) ...Singh, who is also in the fray. ...Bhajan Lal nominees, and six ...mended by Bansi Lal, Birendra ...ngal Singh have been selected; ...Singh's group includes his sister ...

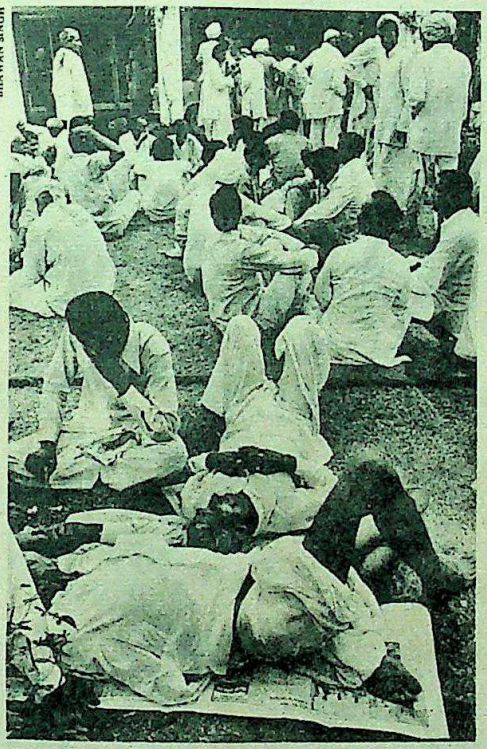
...ozen relatives of Congress(I) ...ctor and Central Cabinet mem... ...o been accommodated. Said Dr ...umari Bajpayee, All India ...committee(I) (AICC-I) general sec... ...eryone is a Congress(I) worker ...to Mrs Gandhi and no one else." ...his has retained the maximum ...ats to influence the selection of a ...nister, in case Bhajan Lal is ...r the elections. Her active con... ...th Bansi Lal and the subsequent ...the list indicate this; Mrs ...candidates include over a dozen ...porters.

...n Lal's supporters, however, are ...hat he will continue as chief ...er the elections. Said one: ...l has assured Indiraji that he ...least 65 MLAs to her house soon ...sts are announced, irrespective ..., and they will all pledge loyalty ...ed a BJP leader: "This sounds ...to go by his past performance."

Ranks: Faced with Bhajan Lal ...pulative politics, the Opposition ...s Devi Lal and his supporters ...k to the Lok Dal after breaking ...arily. Protracted parleys, in ...ng journalists Kuldip Nayar and ...ade participated, led to the Lok ...liance. The seat allocation is: ...' and BJP-23. The idea is ...formidable caste combination ...Brahmins. Harijans and Punjabi ...to dominate the Congress(I) list. ...ation on Charan Singh's famous ...rgent) where Jat leaders pleaded ...ty of Ahirs, Jats, Gujars and ...who constitute over 35 per cent of ...'s electorate—to defeat the ...

...the Lok Dal-BJP list, there are ...Brahmins. Moreover the Lok ...base allied to the BJP's urban ...poses a real threat to the ruling ...n Lal leads the alliance. He was ...chief minister by the Jan Sangh and ...) factions of the united Janata ...%, but, says Dr Mangal Sein, ...the BJP group in the dissolved ...we have forgotten our past ...and can defeat the corrupt ...in Haryana." The Opposition is ...to gain from the rebel Congress(I)

The Lok Dal and BJP leaders are so confident that they spurned an alliance offer from the Congress(S), the Congress(J) and the Janata Party. Charan Singh, who along with Jagjivan Ram addressed a public meeting in Haryana, did not concede his request for 30 seats and offered only six. Says Satya Pal Mullick, Lok Dal secretary: "Seats cannot be given on a platter to anyone because he is a big name without a following." Alliance leaders feel that Ram's independent effort will not help them because Harijan votes traditionally go to the Congress(I)—Ram's leadership in the 1980 Lok Sabha elections did not help much. Finally the Congress(S) and the Janata Party were dismissed as being of no consequence, although Devi Lal had participated in the ill-fated Chandigarh unity convention.



BHAWAN SINGH

Electoral hopefuls outside Haryana Bhavan

IN NEIGHBOURING Himachal Pradesh, all but three defectors from the Janata Party who had joined the Congress(I) were renominated, unlike in Haryana. In the dissolved 68-member Assembly, 26 of the 38 Congress(I) MLAs had crossed the floor soon after Mrs Gandhi's return to power in 1980. As Chief Minister Thakur Ram Lal is a faithful Congressman his word carried weight in the selection. Even the claims of PCC(I) chief Sarla Sharma were ignored. The ruling party decided to field the existing candidates because of the formidable BJP challenge led by former chief minister Shanta Kumar. Only the defectors can match the BJP organisation.

But panic ensued in the Congress(I) when pre-Janata Congressmen who had been denied tickets filed their own nomination papers. These included Karan Singh, Manse Ram, Lal Chand Prathi and six other MLAs. Interestingly, most of them had been unanimously recommended by the various district committees. Said a Youth Congress(I) leader: "Our party has been taken over by defectors. We are being directed to work and vote for those who put us in jail during the Janata regime." Congress(I) leaders deny this charge. Said AICC(I) General Secretary Chandulal Chandrakar: "Every candidate has been selected on merit and he is the winning candidate."

Encouraged by this dissidence, the BJP has surrendered 12 seats to the Lok Dal to take advantage of its Thakur following. But dissidence plagues the Opposition as well. As state Lok Dal leaders like Durga Chand were opposed to Shanta Kumar, their followers wanted an equal number of seats. Over a dozen Lok Dal sympathisers filed their papers as independent candidates against the BJP candidates.

Foregone Conclusion: The pre-election scenario was entirely different in West Bengal and Kerala, where the Congress(I) was fighting Marxist-led fronts—the Left Front in West Bengal and the Left Democratic Front (LDF) in Kerala. In the Marxist bastion of West Bengal the result is a foregone conclusion: the hammer and sickle will come out on top. The main plank of the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) strategy is to get an absolute majority in the 294-seat Assembly, at least 148 seats. In 1977, the CPI-M led front won 241 seats, and the Marxists alone got 209. This enabled Chief Minister Jyoti Basu and his party to keep on a light leash, the other constituents, such as the Forward Bloc, the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), the Forward Bloc (Marxist), the Revolutionary Communist Party of India and the Biplabi Bangla Congress. The constituent parties have a long tradition of fickle-mindedness and some of them actually deserted the Marxists in 1970–71.

The Left Front alliance has now been expanded to include the Communist Party of India (CPI), Bahuguna's DSP, and the socialist fringe of the erstwhile Janata Party. The Marxists are fielding almost the same number of candidates and have accommodated the new entrants at the expense of their allies. Said a CPI-M state committee member: "Of the 209 seats we are contesting it is unlikely that we will lose more than 25." West Bengal pollsters hardly dispute this claim.

No Consensus: The state Congress(I)'s aim is to somehow bring down this tally to 120, so that even if the Left Front gets an absolute majority, members could be persuaded to cross the floor, bringing the min-

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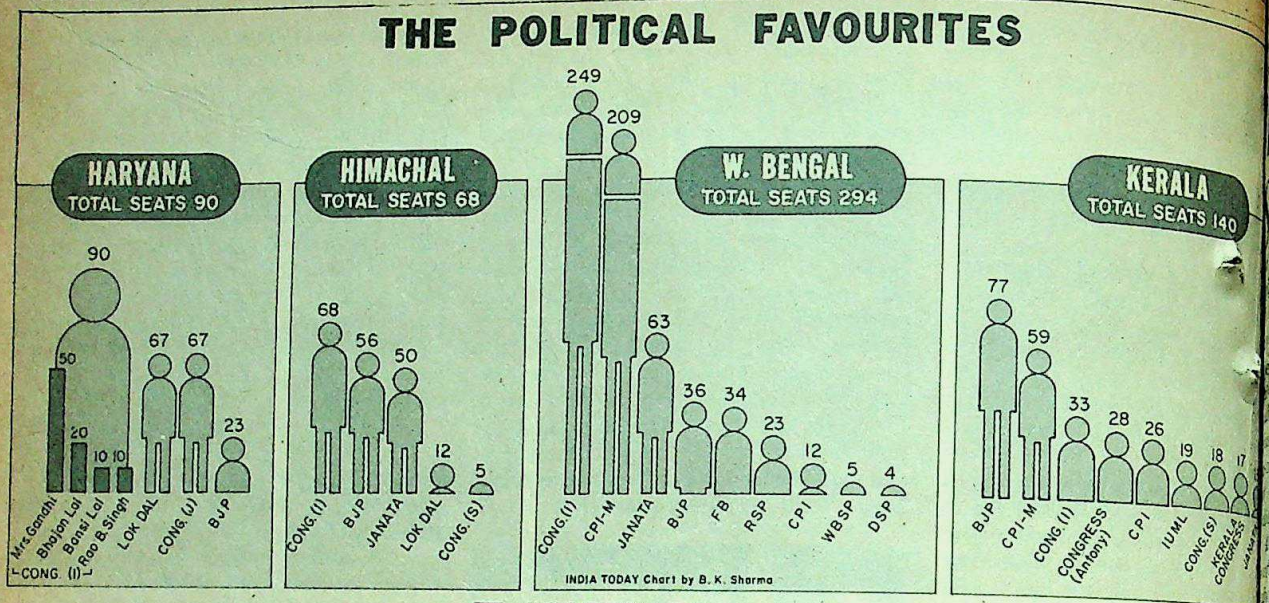


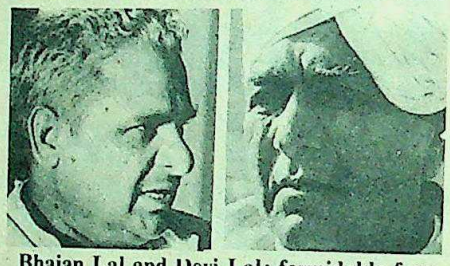
istry down as in 1967. The Marxists won over 70 seats in 1977, because of the split in the non-Left vote. But even after three weeks of parleys and horse-trading the Congress(I) could not arrive at a consensus list. Mrs Gandhi sent Union ministers Pranab Mukherjee and A.B.A. Ghani Khan Chaudhary to Janata Party leader P.C. Sen, but the talks broke down when the party demanded over 60 seats.

In the end, the Congress(I) fielded 249 candidates, leaving 45 for its allies, including the Congress(S). The list contains names from all factions, including those led by Pranab Mukherjee, Chaudhary, and state PCC(I) President Ananda Gopal Mukherjee. The largest slice goes to Chaudhary, whose supporters can provide the badly needed muscle-power for the campaign.

If the Congress(I) was fighting a losing battle in West Bengal, in Kerala it was fighting to regain the power it had lost only 10 weeks ago. Here the CPI-M-led LDF was the first to announce its list, in which over 12 sitting MLAs were replaced. Striking a balance between various castes and religions the list allocates 59 seats to the CPI-M, 26 to the CPI, 18 to the Congress(S), 14 to the All India Muslim League, eight to the RSP and 13 to the Janata Party.

Dissidence: The Congress(I)-led United Democratic Front (UDF) seat allocation is: Congress(I)-33, Congress(S)—Antony group-28, Indian Union Muslim League-19, Kerala Congress (Mani)-17 and others-33. The LDF has been able to project a cohesive image, but dissidents are active in the UDF, with leaders of various front members filing their papers against the official candidate.

For example, T.K. Hamza, president, Malapuram District Congress Committee(I), is fighting against official UDF candidate Aryadan Mohammed in Nilambur constituency. Another district ... tee office-bearer filed his papers ... official Congress(I) nominee ... Gangadharan in Ponnani constitu... addition, over a dozen dissidents were ... against UDF candidates in north Ker... UDF's chances were further reduced ... BJP fielded 77 candidates.


Bhajan Lal and Devi Lal: formidable foes

Shanta Kumar and Ram Lal: close fight

Karunakaran and Nayanar: rebel-rousing

Mukherjee and P.C. Sen: asking for more

In the mad rush for assembly s... Lok Sabha by-elections almost ... noticed. One of these is for the ... Garhwal seat from where Bahugu... ing election. Except for Diamond ... constituency in West Bengal, the ma... tenders in the remaining five seats wi... Congress(I) and the BJP. The ruling ... expected to win the majority of t... Sabha by-elections.

Campaign Promises: The cam... have slipped into familiar gear. Mrs ... flew to Kapuri village in Haryana ... augurate the digging on the Sutlej-Y... canal, which will benefit Haryan... Himachal Pradesh Government ann... additional dearness allowance for ... ployees. The Central Government ... liberal financial support to West Ben... Kerala development projects. ... Congress(I) won. In Parliament ... Mukherjee declared that the W... Government had failed to spend o... crore of the plant outlay.

Mrs Gandhi is taking the elect... seriously. With a presidential elec... August, she cannot afford to lose ... states, and increase the number ... Congress(I) governments to seven ... tuation which prevailed in 1967. ... constituted a high-powered electo... with herself as chairman and Rajiv ... as adviser. Mother and son are ... make every effort to ensure that ... prevails in May.

—PRABHU ...

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INTERVIEW

Angre Is Not For Sale'

SARDAR ANGRE—the name suggests a tall and powerfully built man, bigger in appearance. But Angre, 57 and 62, is none of these. With his white trousers and his fashionable dark brown shirt, he would mix unobtrusively in a gathering of businessmen. Angre has attracted attention by his partner in the purchase of Maneka Gandhi's Surya India. The noise of this deal was still echoing when the two-month strife in the Scindia royal family broke out over the Jai Vilas palace in Gwalior and Angre again is in the news. Angre, a former MP, has been a powerful behind-the-scenes figure in Madhya Pradesh Jan Sangh politics and later in the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). He is credited with bringing about the defection of 36 MLAs which brought down Dwarka Mishra's Congress government in Madhya Pradesh in the '60s. Correspondent SHREEKANT KHANDEKAR met him when he came to Bhopal last fortnight. Excerpts from the interview:

Q. What property do you own?

A. It is all there in the records—a coffee farm in Dewas district and a cold storage factory. Then there is property in my brothers—a flat in Bombay and a room hotel there.

Q. Have you ever owned a newspaper?

A. Yes, I've owned three: *Uday*, *Nagpur* and *Hamari Awaaz*, all local papers.

Q. When and why did you decide to appoint M.V. Kamath as editor of* Surya*?

A. We decided on him just 10 days before. We don't want the magazine to follow the party line and so we employed Kamath. I'm sincere about its neutrality and if we had wanted a pro-BJP stance we could have taken someone like Rajinder Sikri.

Q. Why are you meeting the press today?

A. I don't usually enter into controversies but after the *Surya* sale there had been a lot of kite flying and I thought the matter should be cleared.

Q. You have described the* Surya *purchase by Dr Jain and yourself as a business deal. And yet you say that when there was an attempt to buy back* Surya *for Rs 75 lakh plus Rajya Sabha seats for two of you, you turned it down. If it was purely business, why didn't you accept the offer?

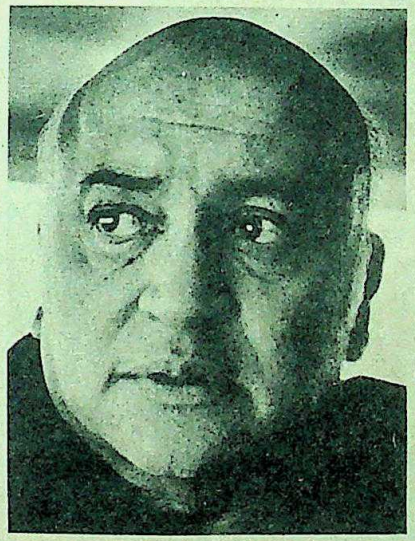
A. Our decision to purchase *Surya* was a business deal; the offer to buy it back was a political decision. You know the credibility of politicians today, but Angre is not bought and sold. Angre cannot be purchased, Angre has never been purchased.

Q. *If the* Surya *purchase was such a good business deal, why didn't someone else go for it?*

A. Would anybody have dared do it? He would have been stripped!

Q. *What reaction did you expect from Mrs Gandhi?*

A. I thought that she would be sorry that she could not destroy *Surya* as she wanted. But she flew completely off the handle. After returning from her trip abroad she connected the *Surya* sale, the Lucknow convention and everything and mixed it up.



Angre: setting the record straight

Q. *Vasundhara (Madhavrao's sister) is said to have acted as a go-between.*

A. She had nothing to do with it. She was a friend of Rajiv and Sonia and later came to know Sanjay and Maneka.

Q. *Have you ever met Maneka or her mother?*

A. No.

Q. *No one in the* BJP *knew about the deal? Not even the rajmata?*

A. No, not even the rajmata.

Q. *How did she react?*

A. She wanted to know why I had taken on another problem.

Q. *Did you think that your party would be embarrassed by being dragged into the controversy?*

A. Mrs Gandhi would blame the American Central Intelligence Agency or the Rashtriya Swyamsewak Sangh (RSS) even if there was no chilly in her food. But the RSS had nothing to do with it. Its workers, however, are happy about the purchase.

Q. *What is your reaction to the income tax notice you have received after the* Surya *purchase?*

A. They should have seen my tax records first before issuing me a notice. Do they think I don't have the capacity to foot a bill of Rs 20,000 to Rs 25,000 (for the purchase)? My family once had 240 villages in Dewas district as its *jagir* and our annual income was Rs 450,000.

Q. *You have been accused of being at the root of the rift between the rajmata and Madhavrao.*

A. When people speculate about my supposed influence over the rajmata, they severely underestimate the lady's political acumen.

Q. *What led to the break between mother and son?*

A. It was a question of methods. Both agreed that dynastic rule and dictatorship must be fought. But while we felt that the struggle must be from outside, he felt that it could be done best by entering the Congress(I). We disagree because if we do it today, somebody will do that to our party tomorrow.

Q. *Why did Mrs Gandhi accept him?*

A. Do you think Mrs Gandhi does not know? She is using him. What has Madhavrao got by joining the Congress (I)? How could a man who was a hater of Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru and Mrs Gandhi overnight turn into their admirer? You should have heard some of his speeches when he was in the Jan Sangh—and now he calls his being with the party the biggest mistake of his life! He is trying to prove his loyalty to Mrs Gandhi (with his statements and actions). Does he have to do it? Other leaders like P.C. Sethi and Kamalapati Tripathi are not doing it. How has Madhavrao got anything to do with my buying *Surya*?

Q. *How do you compare the Maneka-Mrs Gandhi and the Madhavrao-rajmata feuds?*

A. The two cases are just not comparable. Mrs Gandhi and Maneka's is an all-out fight. The rajmata and Madhavrao's is a politiçal difference. The rajmata would never ask her son to "get out".

Q. *Has it affected their personal relationship?*

A. No, it has not changed very much. His family still comes to meet her and she visits them.

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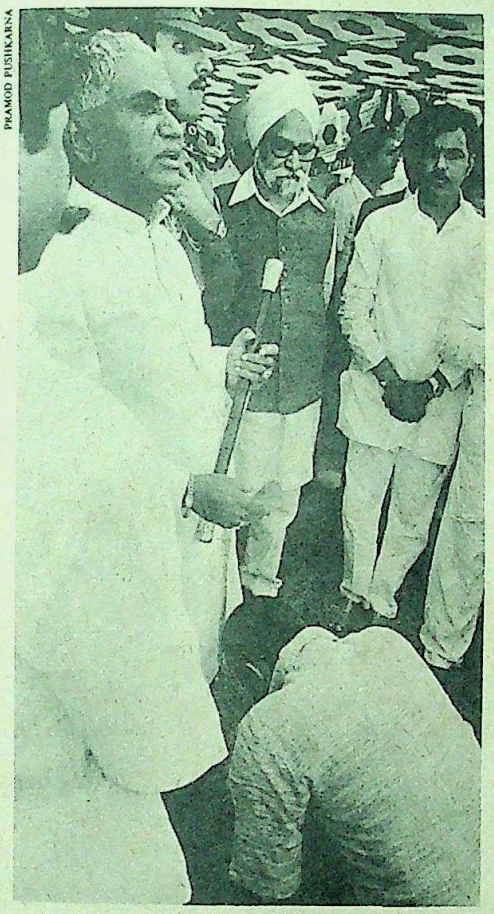
...vernor's Progress

THE 25 palatial abodes of governors and lieutenant-governors dotting the country, despite their luxurious suites, manicured lawns and lavish budgets, are really time-tested gilded cages for politicos. Goose-stepping into ...ight, grudgingly but not wi... was Marri Chenna Reddy, 64, ...minister of Andhra Pradesh.

...given to pageantry, Reddy did ...e opportunity of turning his ...m Andhra Pradesh into a raz... straight out of some Telugu ... Complete with a cast of 125 ...cluding state MLAs and MPs ...backed on the governor-...official entourage all the 1,700 ...derabad to Chandigarh, the ...a miniature Andhra Pradesh ...ing, one direct message: Reddy ...ritten off as a force when the ...the polls in 1983. As one of his ...with telling effect: "Our doctor is ...as governor, but he is not ...of Andhra politics."

...llowing: Mrs Gandhi was de... shift Reddy away from ...ever since he was dropped as ...in December 1980. In the 260-...Congress(I) Legislature Party ...ll credited with a following of ...and is considered to be anathema ...Pradesh, P.V. Narsimha Rao, ...al affairs minister. While Rao ...-hopping around the world and ...gn dignitaries, Reddy was quie... rug from under his feet back in ...desh. Last year, Reddy was ...governorship of ..., which he flatly ...also turned down a ...of the governor-...arashtra.

...he started travel... the length and ...country, meeting ...politicians and ...ears as close to the ...possible. Talking to ...in the chandeliered ...of Chandigarh's ...he said: "I deliber... from travelling ...Pradesh lest it gave ...understanding. But I ...ian, as well as a ...just as a doctor has ...fingers on the pulse of the patient, a politician has to constantly meet people to know what is happening."



PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

Reddy with Darbara Singh: soap opera

Manipulation: However, as Reddy's successor T. Anjiah was thrown out of office in February this year, Rao scored yet another hit at his adversaries by manipulating the installation of his protégé, Bhavanam Venkataram, as the state's third chief minister in four years. Reportedly, Rao was able to convince the prime minister as well as Rajiv Gandhi that Reddy's removal from the Hyderabad scene was a sine qua non for Venkataram's and the Congress(I)'s survival in Andhra Pradesh. Reddy then sought to be appointed vice-chairman of the Union Planning Commission, but "I don't know why it never materialised". Those who are conversant with Mrs Gandhi's threat perception abilities feel that she might have disapproved of having the wily Reddy operating either on his home turf or in Delhi, the nerve-centre of Congress(I) politics.

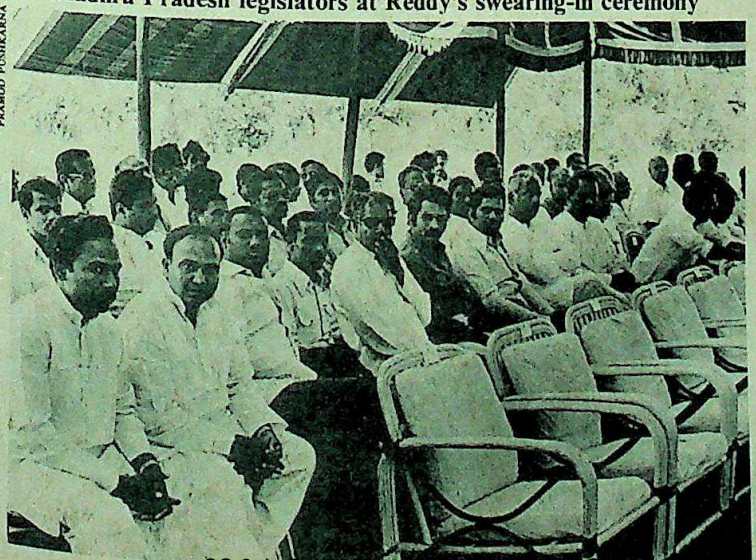
On March 29, soon after her return from London, Mrs Gandhi directed her political aide Makhanlal Fotedar to summon Reddy to the capital and to sound him out about his new posting in Chandigarh. Reddy dragged his feet at first, but was obliged to accept the bait when Pranab Mukherjee, Union finance minister and Mrs Gandhi's hatchet man, repeated the offer to him, this time with the rider that it was her command rather than just a request.

Said Reddy: "For one who had been the governor of India's most populous state (Uttar Pradesh), the present job might appear to be none too impressive. But I agreed to come to Chandigarh in view of the state's burning problems—the Khalistan problem, the Akali problem, the problems of integration in a linguistic state divided sharply along communal lines. The state is not big but its problems are big." Reddy's friends assert that the party high command had also brought pressure to bear on Satya Sai Baba so that the Bangalore-based godman would order his disciple to proceed to Chandigarh.

Patient Politician: Reddy has clearly lost out to Rao in the race for supremacy in Andhra Pradesh politics. But he has patience and bore well his earlier years of hibernation when he was shunted off to Uttar Pradesh in the wake of violent upheavals in Andhra Pradesh. Even before he was formally sworn in as governor of Punjab and Haryana, he was talking at length about "active governorship" as opposed to the governor's passive role as a constitutional figure-head. He was expatiating on the governor's duty to build bridges between "the Centre and the state, the people and the Government".

Darbara Singh, already pushed to the wall in the face of sustained hostility from Union Home Minister Giani

Andhra Pradesh legislators at Reddy's swearing-in ceremony



PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

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...is reading ominous meanings ...pointment of an "active gover-... Singh: "He has been appointed ... command and I don't like to ... the high command's decision." ...was alarm evident on his face, ...flowing silver beard and topped ...khadi turban. Two months ago, ...had successfully lobbied at ...stall the appointment of Kama-...hi, the septuagenarian patriarch ...Pradesh, as governor of Punjab. ...Reddy, is known to command all ...the world and can outwit chief ...with ease.

...leaving for Chandigarh, Reddy ...session with old friend Zail Singh, ...he brushed up his knowledge ...politics. "My first job will be to go ...districts as fast as possible," he ...hope to cover the whole state in a ...I visited each district of Uttar ...exactly a year's time." Reddy-...insist that as governor he is a ...combatant, and during his te-...know he used to shoot off highly ...notes to Delhi on the local ... Said he: "Once, when Bahuguna was chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, I remember having sent a twenty-page report on the Government." Knowing that the reports came in handy for Mrs Gandhi when she sacked H.N. Bahuguna in 1975, Darbara Singh naturally has a lot to fear from Reddy's well-known penchant for correspondence with Delhi. Quipped a confidant: "Reddy may turn out to be the proverbial thin end of the wedge."

New Element: For Mrs Gandhi it was a demonstration of her unique skill at transferring the odd figures from the debit side of the ledger to the credit side. At one stroke she rid Andhra Pradesh of a formidable personality. But she has introduced into the Punjab scene a new element which might start a chain reaction. However, commenting on such apprehensions in Punjab, Reddy said: "Why should I clash with the chief minister? I am not a pugnacious man, I don't interfere with the administration. But wherever I go the MLAs and the ordinary people meet me."

Within hours of his arrival, the Raj Bhavan staff unlocked and cleaned up all the six suites in the stylishly designed building. Its new occupant went from room to room examining the printings and the decorations. He posed in front of a portrait of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and, soon after the swearing-in, dashed to Amritsar to pay homage at the famed Golden Temple. Accompanying him were five former ministers of Andhra Pradesh, 38 sitting legislators of the state and three MPs, not to speak of his friends and relatives. Said Ganga Reddy, former excise minister: "Wherever our doctor goes, we will stay in touch. He is a source of inspiration." Echoed Uma Venkatarama Reddy, MLC and the only woman member of the entourage: "Except for the prime minister nobody other than Chenna Reddy commands so much respect in Andhra Pradesh."

Donning a khadi cap after his swearing-in, and wearing a genial smile, Reddy mingled with his admirers and other guests at a tea and *vada* party hosted at Raj Bhavan. There he flaunted his Sai Baba ring and remarked that he would return to Hyderabad whenever God chose. But between Reddy and the divinity falls the shadow of Mrs Gandhi, and his journeys through the Raj Bhavan may be a lifetime of diaspora.

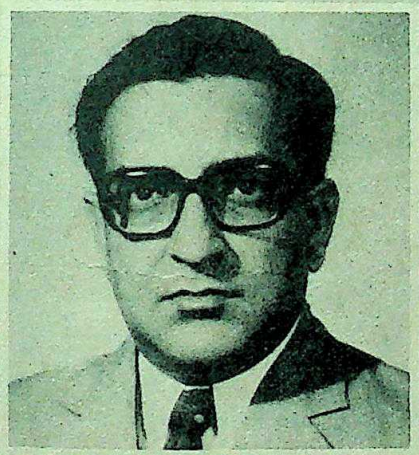
—SUMIT MITRA in Chandigarh

...BENGAL

...hilial Feeling

...LTHOUGH their victory is certain the Communist Party of India-Marxist will have a hard ...fying their decision to hand over ...Diamond Harbour ticket for the ...by-elections to Jyoti Basu's ne-... Amal Dutta. Though it smacks ...of nepotism, the Marxists have ...ently been finding it difficult to find ...toral replacement for Bosu, who ...a heart attack last January. When ...chief minister gingerly suggested ...name, it was gratefully accepted ...party High Command. Dutta was ...not only because no other name ...coming but because he had been ...election agent since 1967 and is no ...to the constituency.

...Identity Crisis: Dutta, 48, has had ...derable experience of living in other ...'s shadows. As a student he used ...constantly reminded of the glorious ...of his father, S. Dutta, an ...teacher who held high posts in ...State Government, and since 1977 ...Jyoti Basu became chief minister ...has had a tough time fighting the ...ion that his emergence as a ...ment lawyer was due to his uncle. ...exasperated Dutta told INDIA TODAY,



Dutta: out of the shadows

"I do not know why the party decided to nominate me but I am sure my relationship with the chief minister has nothing to do with it."

However, Dutta's emergence as a public figure—first as junior standing counsel for the state Government and now as a Lok Sabha candidate—does coincide with the coming of the Left Front government five years ago. While Dutta maintains, "When the Marxists came to power and I became a government lawyer the relationship went against me even though I proved my worth in the courts," his critics say that without the Left Front he would not have made good as a lawyer and would have continued his previous business of constructing high-rise apartments. Dutta was secretary of Urbashi Cooperatives which builds fairly high-priced tenements in Calcutta.

Formidable Legacy: But even after Dutta takes his seat in Parliament—the Diamond Harbour constituency is considered a shoo-in for the CPI-M—he will still have his formidable predecessor to live up to. But he seems determined to come out of the shadows and asserts, "Even though I was a great friend and admirer of Jyotirmoy, no one should expect me to be his replica. If elected I will function purely as I and my party feel fit and there can be no question of carrying on somebody's legacy."

But Dutta is making sure the electorate remembers his close links with Bosu. The party-approved election pamphlet makes frequent references to his association with the former MP and how Dutta, a graduate of the London School of Economics, used to advise Bosu on law and economics. Bosu's son is also campaigning for Dutta, which in a predominantly rural constituency is a sure way of winning over those voters who may not be committed to the Marxist cause but who retain warm memories of Jyotirmoy Bosu as a person.

—SUMANTA SEN

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KERALA

Imitation Of Life

FROM sex to politics, film producer I.V. Sasi, who shot into notoriety through *Her Nights,* and other semi-erotic movies is back with a bang. Sasi, who has had three flops in a row, has come out with *Eenad* (this country) which has brought the audiences flocking in.

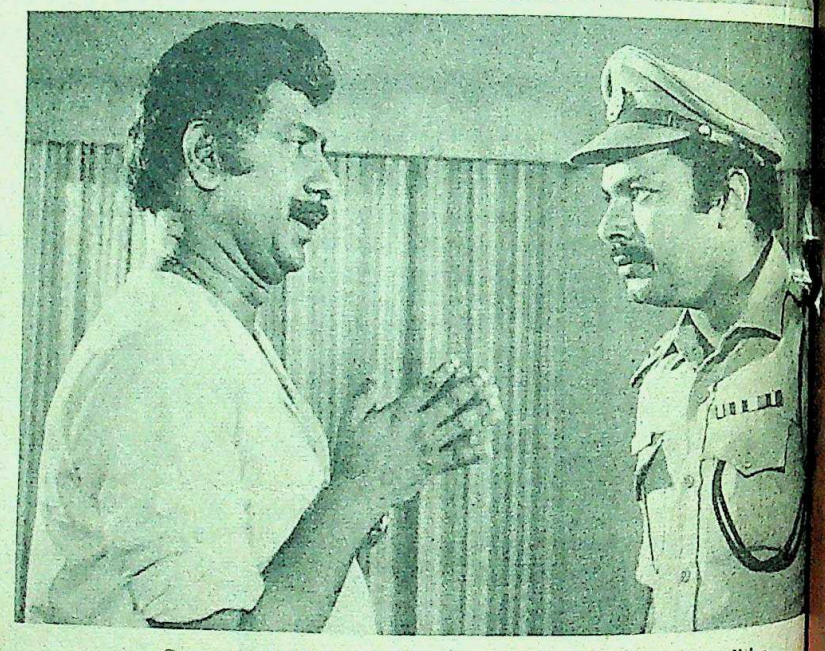
The film is a hard-hitting full-length parody which takes swipes at practically every contemporary event in Kerala and its chief target is the Karunakaran ministry, which survived for 80 days on the strength of the speaker's casting vote. The movie is visibly pro-Marxist, and it is a wonder that the movie, with its vulgar language, and anti-Congress(I) theme got through the censors.

Thin Plot: The story of the movie, loose though it is, revolves around Krishna Pillai, a Marxist leader of yesteryears who is bypassed by his own party men and who finds out how hard it is to get anything done for the people because of crooked politicians. His nephew Venu is a union leader who fights for the cause of workers affected by water pollution from a nearby factory but sells out to the factory owner, a liquor baron named Karunakaran.

Karunakaran makes Venu a partner in his adulterated liquor trade. The liquor they sell kills 2,000 people in a small town. But by this time, Venu who leads a party of five MLAs defects to the Opposition. Venu musters enough MLAs to become the chief minister. Sasi also throws in a journalist, whose son is involved in a marks list scandal; he writes a piece supporting Venu and an honest police officer who has documentary evidence against Venu and the liquor baron, but realises the futility of fighting a corrupt system and compromises.

The film ends abruptly with the murder of comrade Krishna Pillai who is done to death by his nephew's henchmen. The people of his village collect around Venu stopping him from proceeding to the Raj Bhavan for the swearing-in ceremony watched by a silent police force.

Mixed Reception: The film has received mixed reviews so far. Balan K. Nayar as Krishna Pillai acts brilliantly. But patches are in appallingly bad taste. Sasi has not forgotten to add a couple of bedroom scenes, a vulgar strip-tease and an attempted gang-rape in a chemistry laboratory of a college.



Scenes from I.V. Sasi's *Eenad*: parody of present-day politics

But it has come at just the right time and the election fever in the state has catapulted it to instant success. Says Govinda Pillai, the editor of *Deshabhimani*, the Communist Party of India-Marxist(CPI-M) organ: "*Eenad* has given us a boost. It has exposed the dirty deeds of the Congress(I)." The movie's producer Geo Kuttappan, however, insists that it is neither pro-CPI-M nor anti-Congress(I). He adds: "We only want to show that whoever rules Kerala is a dummy of the powerful liquor lobby in the state."

Certainly the story weaves in as many contemporary events as it can. Written by Damodaran Master, it has incidents which are remarkably similar to the Bangalore liquor tragedy, the spirit scandal, m... mental pollution caused by the G... Rayon factory in Mavoor, the ... objection certificates racket and ... list scandal. Sasi defends his mov... "*Eenad* is a super hit because the p... are shown as human beings through ... of a commercial director."

There is said to have been ... ssure on the producers to withdraw ... scenes. But Sasi and Kuttappan hop... not run into trouble till May 24 w... new Government is sworn in. Barr... problems the movie is expected ... up its good showing at the box-offi...

—SREEDHAR

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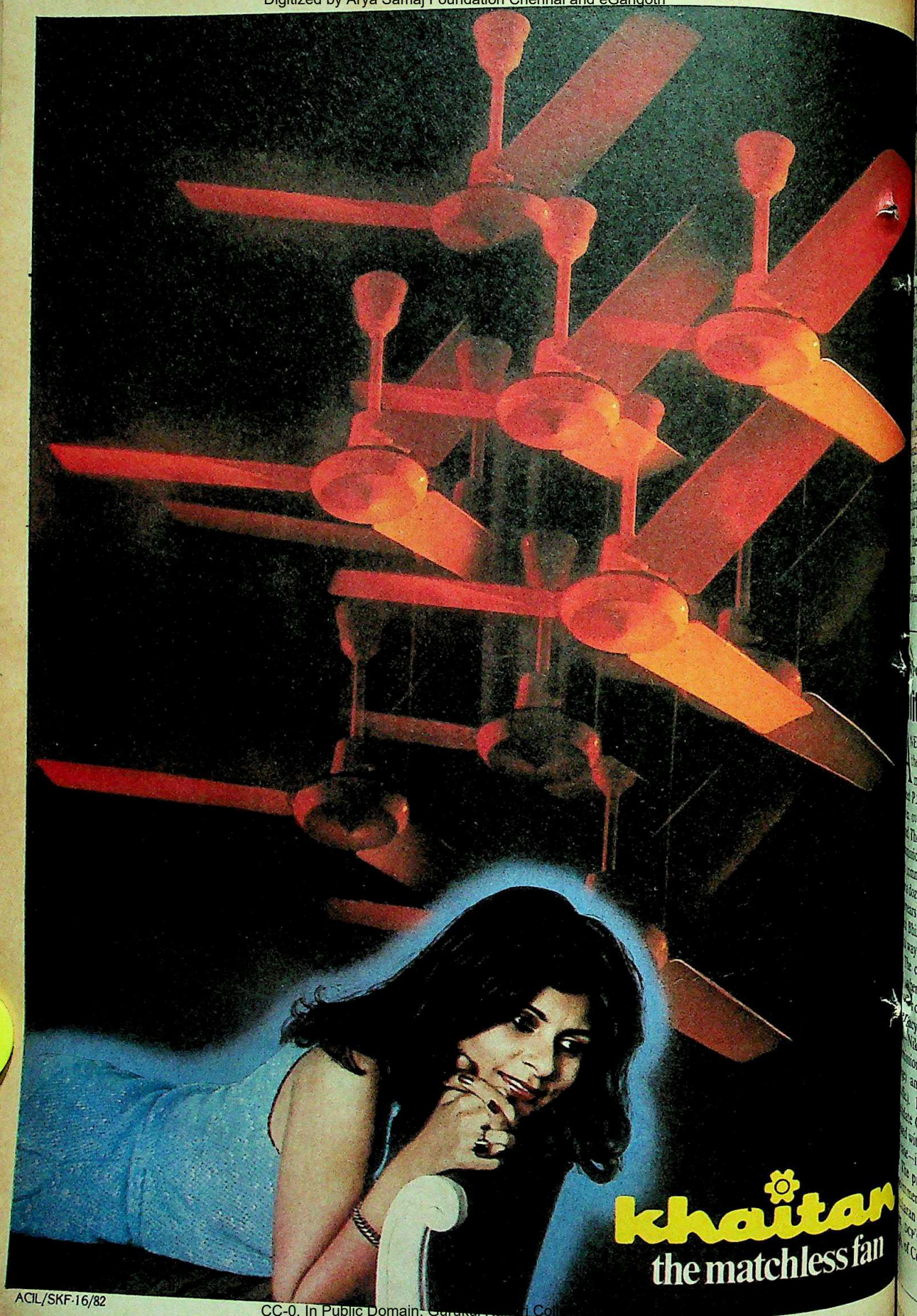

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h Haul

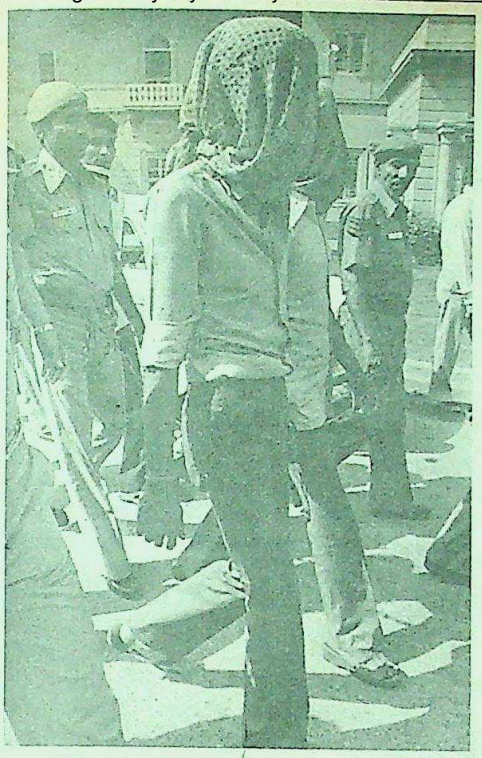
THE WIDELY held belief that crime is confined to the poor and the semiliterate was once again exploded last fortnight. In a midnight swoop, the Delhi Police arrested Satinder Singh, son of Prem Chand Aggarwal, son of jewellery owner, Sarbjit Singh alias Bobby, a master of business administration and Gurvinder Singh, a taxi driver, for their alleged involvement in two spectacular bank hold-ups that have rocked the city in the last 10 months. In these two robberies the desperadoes decamped with over Rs 31 lakh.

According to the police, the four were members of a five-member gang which stole Rs 5 lakh from the Greater Kailash branch of the Central Bank of India on June 2, 1981 and Rs 26 lakh from the South Extension branch of the Canara Bank on September 7, 1981. They recovered from them Rs 2.25 lakh, country-made weapons, a car and two scooters, all believed to have been used for committing the crimes.

Luxurious Lives: Police officials cannot put their finger on the exact motive for the crimes, but the desire of the accused to live luxurious lives and roam the world apparently drove them to it. Two of the accused spent large sums of money at the races and one went to Hong Kong on a binge. Satinder Singh's family recently moved into a new house on Kasturba Gandhi Road near Connaught Place.

Five people committed the robberies in both the banks but one of the five was not given his share. He blurted out the entire story to a relative in Madhya Pradesh. Within a fortnight, Nikhil Kumar and Surjeet Singh, additional commissioners, Delhi Police, received two telephone calls from Gwalior and Bhopal informing them about the identities of the bank robbers.

All four were subjected to surveillance for a month. In the early hours of April 21, a high-powered team led by Surjeet Singh and Kumar, and comprising of two deputy commissioners, two assistant police commissioners, and four station house officers simultaneously raided the residences of all the four and caught them unawares. The fifth person has not been arrested so far. Said Surjeet Singh: "Our job was much more



Alleged robbers: great expectations

POLICE

itical Purge

A NEW broom is sweeping through the Delhi Police. In the four months since Bajrang Lal replaced P.S. Bhinder as police commissioner, over 30 officers have been transferred. They include four of the six deputy commissioners of police (DCP), six assistant commissioners of police (ACP) and a dozen station house officers (SHO). It appears that the Emergency clique, of which Bhinder was the brightest star, is being wiped out.

The current purge began in April when S.L. Khurana became Lt Governor of Delhi. Two opponents of the Bhinder caucus received important assignments. Nikhil Kumar became additional commissioner of police (New Delhi range) and Kiran Bedi became DCP (HQ). Khurana rejected Bhinder's choice Gurcharan Singh—one of the officers with Bhinder in the Sunder murder case—in favour of Bedi.

The process accelerated with Lal's appointment in December. DCP Gurcharan Singh was the first to go. Two more DCPs T.R. Kakkar and Balwant Rai of Central Delhi and South Delhi

Lal (left) and Bhinder: legacy ends

respectively, were shipped out. Over a dozen ACP's—including those of New Delhi, Kingsway Camp and Kotwali—were also shifted. It is a known fact that fund-raising efforts for Bhinder's legal battles during the Janata regime met with considerable success in these areas. The latest officer to be transferred was ACP Narinder Singh (Crime).

Key Posts: After this successful foray, Lal moved the Home Ministry for the transfer of K.S. Bajwa, who was occupying the key position of ACP (Intelligence). Bajwa was superintendent of police (Special Branch) during the Emergency and his department was responsible for large-scale arrests of political leaders. His transfer orders came through in March, but he managed to stay on for another month. G.S. Mandher, inspector-general of police, Goa, who replaced Bajwa, had to wait some time before taking charge even after he reported for duty in Delhi.

With the ouster of Bhinder favourites from key posts, the Delhi Police appears to have been freed of groupism for the time being. Until December last year, the top posts were divided between pro- and anti-Bhinder officials. Nikhil Kumar led over half-a-dozen senior Thakur officers who had been denied important assignments by Bhinder. The former police chief was able to retain his supporters in key posts because he was able to bring the incidence of crime down by 15 per cent. However, he came under attack for corruption at all levels—some senior officer had built their own houses within two years of taking charge.

Lal's most important worry remains the more than 500 sub-inspectors and constables—many of them from Bhinder's wife Sukhwant Kaur's Lok Sabha constituency in Punjab—who were recruited in 1980–81. They can mar Lal's image. The latest spurt in bank robberies has already done that, and Lal is obviously ensuring that he doesn't also have to face an enemy within.

—PRABHU CHAWLA

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difficult since we were dealing with people who were new entrants in the underworld: hence the delay."

Significant Link: Though Delhi Police officers deny it, it is believed that the delay was caused by a link between senior police officers and some of those involved in the robberies. One of the accused, in fact, is related to a senior Indian Police Service officer posted with the Delhi Police.

The Home Ministry has lately been flooded with complaints that a powerful group of police officers occupying important posts is in league with the criminals. Admits a Home Ministry official: "We are looking into these complaints including the one related to the bank robbery case." If any substance is found in the complaints, heads are likely to roll and the police may be able to solve the unsolved crimes.

—PRABHU CHAWLA

GUJARAT

Feuds In The Family

THE RULING party in Gujarat is being riven by personality clashes. Finance Minister Sanat Mehta lashed out publicly against Chief Minister Madhavsinh Solanki last fortnight because he felt that Solanki had tried to tarnish his image in an interview to a Bombay fortnightly by subtly suggesting that Mehta was involved in clandestine land deals in his Waghodia constituency. Then Health and Civil Supplies Minister Manoharsinh Jadeja disclosed that nearly 5,000 bags of cement were missing from an irrigation project in Dantiwada in Banasanta district. Upon this, Irrigation Minister Amarsinh Chaudhary went to the press with a vehement denial.

Of the two feuds the Solanki-Mehta confrontation was the more serious. The Waghodia constituency, though it is on the outskirts of the industrial oasis of Baroda, is one of the most backward and unproductive areas in the state. On March 31, the state Government declared it a growth centre and announced subsidies to entrepreneurs starting units there. Land speculators rushed in and bought land at throwaway prices. According to the Solanki camp, some of the main buyers were Mehta's friends.

In a letter to Solanki dated October 12, 1981, Mehta pointed out that he knew none of the big buyers who had grabbed land just before Waghodia was declared a growth centre. He has asked Solanki to institute a judicial enquiry. According to his supporters, Mehta also asked his personal office in Baroda to write to the *mamlatdar* (land revenue official) of Waghodia to ensure that the racketeering was checked, got a circular sent to over 80 sarpanchs of Waghodia warning of land sharks and tried to persuade the Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) to start an industrial estate there. But the GIDC soft-pedalled the idea. Says Manubhai Patel, president of Waghodia taluk panchayat: "Workers from all political parties have bought land here under other names. All this propaganda about Mehta is just to tarnish his image."

Vigilance Report: A well-known confidant of Solanki's, Congress(I) MLA from Baroda Mahendrasinh Chauhan, used to visit Waghodia to collect land sales details. He had reportedly even asked opposition workers to collect evidence against Mehta. After Mehta reacted angrily to Solanki's interview, the chief minister has asked vigilance officials at Gandhinagar to collect evidence against Mehta. An earlier 25-pa
ance report has not been made pu
though it only contains statistics
deals and in no way implicates
According to the report, land spe
bought 2,698 acres from 18 Wagho
lages for Rs 1.63 crore. At current pr
land is worth Rs 7.08 crore. The re
pointed out other irregularities in the

As for the interview, Solanki
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According to Mehta, Solanki ha
to make a statement in the Assem
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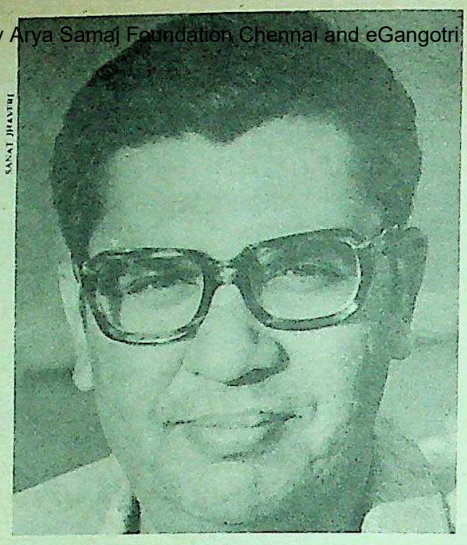
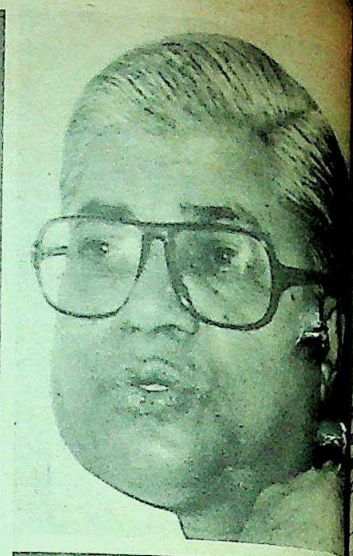
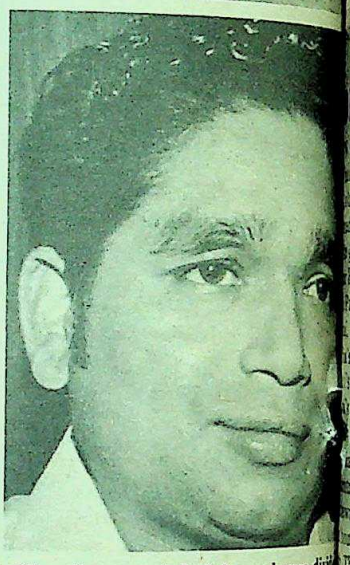
demand came up for hearing, but h
do so. Said Mehta: "I would never
to the press. But I had to break
imposed silence so that people k
truth." Asserted Vadilal
Congress(I) MLA and a Mehta su
"If Solanki can suggestively talk
Mehta to the press, why can't Me
up and defend himself?"

After land, cement. Even as C







(Clockwise from top left) Mehta, Solanki, Chaudhary and Jadeja: a house divi

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...g his denials, Food and Civil ...troller Roy Chowdhary estab... ...ment was indeed being diverted ...igation project to a private ...Ahmedabad with the connivance ...department officials. Chow... ...ded numerous statements by ...d those involved in the scan... ...e were arrested—three irri... ...two transport operators and ...who were assisting in adulterating ...with grey powder to sell it in the ...Jadeja reacted strongly to ...statement that the civil supplies ...was blowing the case out of proportion; he said: "It is not a case of two cabinet colleagues fighting each other. It is a question of what is right and what is wrong. Why should I suppress the truth?"

Surprise Raid: Close on the heels of the cement scandal, a civil supplies squad carried out a surprise raid on the residence of Chaudhary's father-in-law. It found over 50 bags of cement and also detected gross irregularities in the use of cement for constructing two houses belonging to his family. A furious Chaudhary saw Jadeja's hand in the raid, but Jadeja asserted that he knew of the raid only after Chaudhary rang him up. He added that his officers were conducting only routine raids.

With ministerial squabbles hotting up, it turns out that the reprieve Solanki received when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi dropped Maganbhai Barot in the recent cabinet reshuffle and cut Yogendra Makwana and Kumudbehn Joshi to size was short-lived. Barot, Makwana and Joshi used to castigate Solanki publicly. After their fall, dissident activity in the Gujarat Congress(I), which had picked up momentum in January this year, fizzled out. But Solanki's house is not yet in order, and it will take a lot of common sense and tact to keep it together.

—RAMESH MENON

...RABAND

...lden Fleece

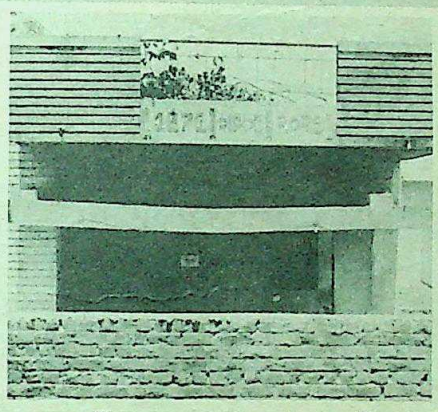
...ONE of their most sensational ...s, Gujarat customs seized 7,000 ...s of gold valued at Rs 1.4 crore at ...abad on April 15. Prime movers ...gold were Iqbal alias Mohammed ...Hussein alias Kadar Ahmed Bhatti, ...Pakistani national operating out of ...and his lover Rekha Sheth, 18. ...'s sister Indu Sheth, 32, who was ...courier was also arrested, as were ...driver Hasmukh Sharma, 25, and ...contact man Hari Prajapati, 30. ...atti's nefarious activities were ...ated in a bungalow in the ...adi area of Ahmedabad, which he ...ught in Rekha's name for Rs 3.60 ...Though Bhatti is nearly 17 years ...than the vivacious commerce stu... ...the two had struck it off instantly ...introduced a year ago by Indu, who ...courier for smugglers for four ...The relationship was satisfying in ...ways than one: Rekha recently ...a draft of Rs 1 lakh from Dubai ...Rs 60,000 in her account.

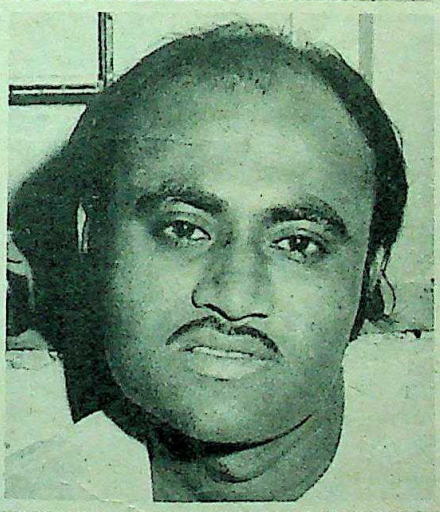
...this satisfying idyll could not last ...Customs Collector B.V. Kumar ...a tip that a certain Iqbal had the ...touch. Two inspectors, W.H. ...N.H. Dave, were put on the ...ed their way to the bungalow ...with Kumar and other officers, ...on April 15. Apart from the gold, ...Rs 73,000 in currency notes and ...goods worth Rs 43,000. ...air tickets in bogus names were ...presumably for use by the ...

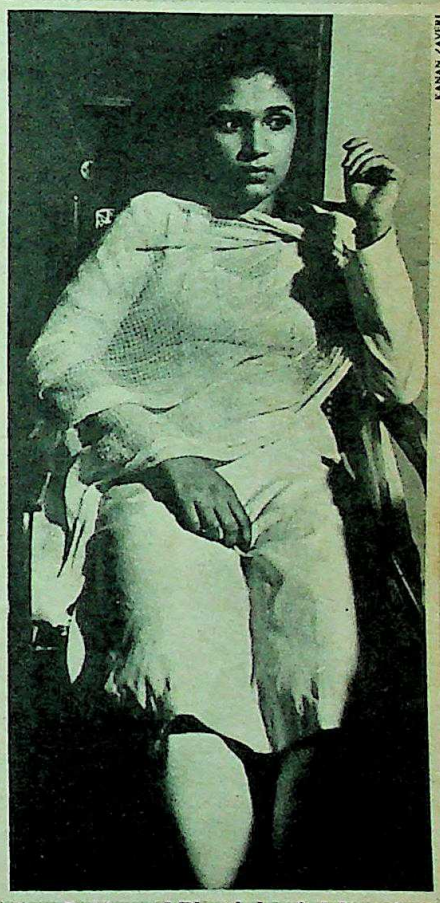
...ficient Network: On the heels of ...haul, the officers raided another ...in Ahmedabad's Thaltej area, ...by Bhatti in the name of Mahadev ...a photo-frame maker who makes Rs 400 a month. However, only documents showing transactions of silver were found here, similar to others unearthed in the Ambawadi bungalow. Later enquiries revealed that Bhatti operated a smoothly-organised network, distributing gold in exchange for silver, the transactions carried out at night by his couriers.

It appears that Bhatti, who is already married and has six children in Karachi, is more concerned for Rekha than spending 20 years in jail—he was apparently planning to marry the girl and had got her passport made in the name of Mumtaz Ahmed Bhatti. Rekha's loss is the authorities' gain. Said M.L. Wadhawan, director, revenue intelligence, who had flown in from Delhi to supervise the investigation: "The seized gold belongs to a Pakistani smuggling syndicate operation from Dubai. We may soon find clues to track down big international smugglers."

—RAMESH MENON







KANAN ZAVERI

(Clockwise from top) The Ambawadi bungalow, Rekha and Bhatti: love's labour lost

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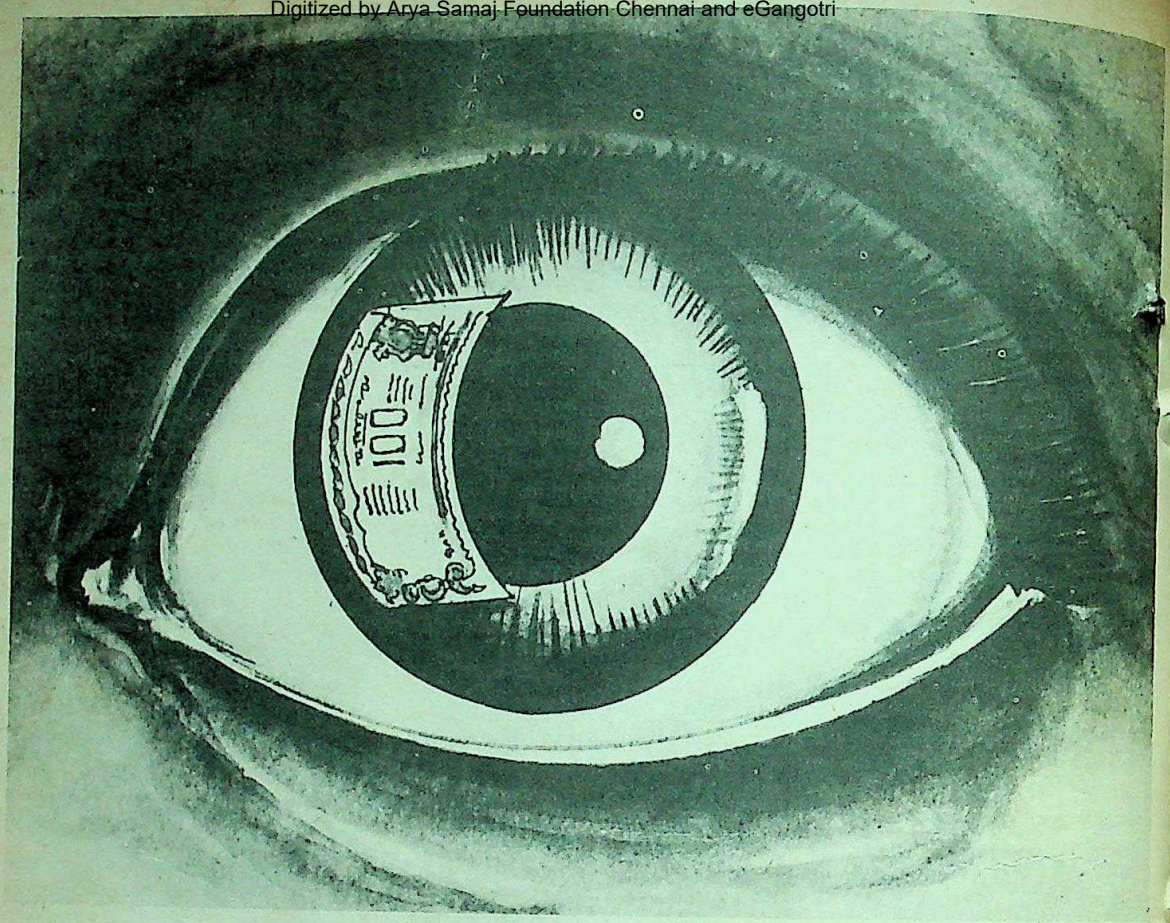

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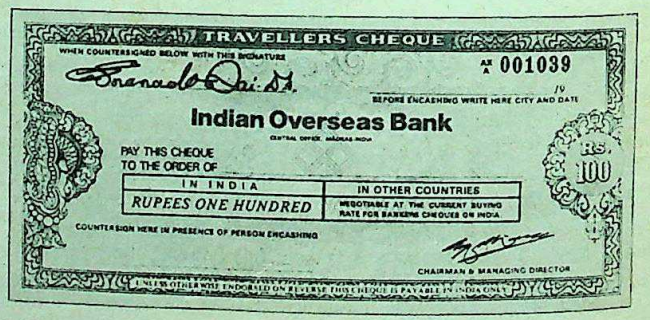

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DESH

ration Cover-up?

THE SHOTS that Indian lawmen fire to quell rioting citizens often echo beyond the immediate confines of the confrontation: in courts, elected assemblies and other forums of public . It was when a contingent of cial Armed Constabulary (PAC) more than 300 striking workers in wara factory complex of Rallis in Unnao district of Uttar ly 70 km from the state capital, Opposition members alleged that were missing after the firing and themselves gave graphic accounts rutality, complete with lists of the The inevitable magisterial inquiry has been going on for three length of time which suggests that of studied bureaucratic indifferconcerted cover-up attempt at may not be entirely unfounded. cident at the fertilisers factory on January 3. Earlier, a sit-in the workers developed into a full- which was declared illegal by the rnment. On the fateful day, an b took over the factory premises to budge when asked to do so by sional magistrate present. The ed to a lathi charge, which had and then fired in "self-defence". official figures say that only six were fired; the police also main- two workers were killed in the Naresh Tripathi, 35, fitter- and Ram Naresh Verma, 45, Tripathi succumbed to gunshot the Medical College, Kanpur, and the Medical College, Lucknow.

Workers: Others tell a grimmer ian Prakash Singh, general sec- the Communist Party of India ed Unnao Chemical Employees which is supported by a majority of kers, has made a list of six other ssing or feared killed. These are Singh, 46, fitter, Ali Qamar, 28, ter-cum-helper, Ramzan Ali, 46, ammed Akbar Ali, 47, general Sardar Singh, 28, fitter-cum-helper Lal, 36, fitter. K.P. Singh, who dismissed by the Rallis manage- union activities, was arrested as three times in connection with the

ghtening picture of police brutality it is painted by Babulal, one of the He stated that he was almost blin-

ded by panic and in his scramble for safety stumbled into a freshly-dug trench where he crouched for hours after the last volley had been fired. According to him, another eyewitness saw Akbar Ali and Ramzan Ali—both on the missing list—being dragged away and thrust into a burning police van where they were trapped in a ring of flames. When one of them tried to escape he was shot dead. The police maintain that the workers set the van on fire, while according to more than one witness it was the police themselves who had done so to establish a cause for the firing.

Dark Death: Evidence that the Rallis factory compound was the scene of more deaths than the authorities care to admit comes from the Harijan village of Dayal Khera, which is just across the narrow, uneven, dusty track that skirts the factory. Several villagers swore that the intermittent firing had lasted much longer than it takes to let off six rounds. Chotey Lal, who received minor injuries from a stray bullet, said that the firing started near the hour of dusk. During the chaotic moments that followed, most of the lights mounted on the boundary wall and elsewhere within the compound went off and all that could be heard in the unsettling darkness were screams of fleeing workers often cut short by bursts of gunfire.

The police appear to have embarked on a quiet operation to dispose of the evidence. Acchayalal Kushwaha, 31, a generator attendant and general secretary of the Rallis union, who was later suspended and jailed for six days, asserted that the bodies were dumped in the Ganga, after carting them over the bridge at Kanpur. To ensure that there were no prying eyes, road traffic between Kanpur and Unnao was blocked for at least four hours early the next morning.

Worse was yet to come. Kushwaha says that the next day, the police returned to Dayal Khera and rounded up people at random, shouting abuse all the time. Two shops were ransacked and one of them set on fire. Chandradeo, a college student from Kanpur and a resident of the village, was severely beaten up in public, as was also Chabinath Shukla, a worker in the ordnance factory at Kanpur. While 23 people were arrested on the spot for rioting, 28 others surrendered voluntarily. Warrants had been made out against these workers. In the first information report lodged subsequently, 51 have been named but 300 to 400 others remain unnamed. According to Mahabir Yadav, 33, who is conducting the magisterial enquiry, it would be another fortnight before any conclusions can be reached.

Rallis factory in Unnao, K.P. Singh (left) and Babulal: unanswered questions

Allegations: The state government's opponents have been strident with their allegations of a cover-up. Mohan Singh, state Lok Dal leader, said that there is a definite attempt on the part of the Government to fabricate evidence in its own favour and to hush up the harrowing details. Singh was among the first to reach the site, and charges that he was prevented from entering the factory. He added that for at least 20 days after the firing, Dayal Khera was sealed off from the outside world. He alleges that the present enquiry is a sham, and hints that the government's reluctance to institute a proper enquiry stems from the fact that the current labour minister is a former leader of the

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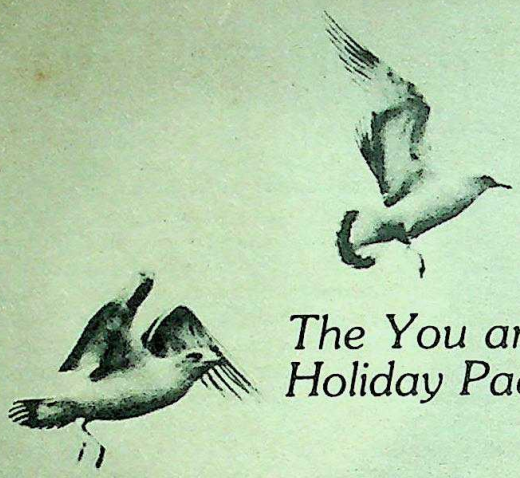

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...backed Indian National Trade ...gress, while the strikers are CPI-...backed by the All India Trade ...gress.

...n's resolve has in no way been ...the bullets. It is sticking to its ...mand note, which includes re-...ges and pay parity with other ...n Explosives Ltd, Kanpur. ...s such as George Fernandes ...Dal and Subramaniam Swamy ...Dandavate of the Janata Party ...r to the prime minister strongly ...the police brutalities and de-...judicial enquiry. Ashacharan ...local advocate who is pleading ...e of the factory workers, has ...at at least nominal compen-...d both by the Government and ...ent to the families of the two ...d workers. That the authorities ...their feet over even this meagre ...n is a perfect measure of their ...

—ANAND SAGAR

MADHYA PRADESH

The Ubiquitous Politician

LONG after Mrs Gandhi is gone and the Congress(I) has disintegrated; long after a nuclear holocaust—predicted so regularly and with such morbid optimism—has wiped civilization off the earth, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Arjun Singh will be remembered. He will be remembered not for his extraordinary wisdom or for his mass appeal or even for the dissidence that he puts up with: his name will be recalled because no historian of the future will be able to ignore what amounts to massive evidence of Singh's omnipresence in the state.

In a bare 22 months Singh has single-handedly laid an estimated 200 foundation-stones and inaugurated well over a 100 buildings and projects. As no nuclear war is likely to wipe out all this evidence scattered over cities, towns, villages, fields and in every nook and corner of this massive state, Singh's place even in post-apocalypse history is secure.

Popularity Measures: While Haryana's Bhajan Lal can be accused of seeking cheap popularity by laying foundation stones in view of the coming elections (see INDIA TODAY, April 30), this cannot be said of Arjun Singh with whom such occupation has been synonymous ever since he became chief minister. What is more, he has managed all this in spite of the fact that in addition to his duties as chief minister he has half a dozen departments—including vital ones like home and energy—under his charge.

His has been the classic reaction of a

Bakshi (left) and Swaroop Kumari: conflict

...idows' War

...WO WOMEN, both declaring ...themselves to be widows of Raj-...umar Bakshi who died in 1976, ...ming ownership of a three-and-a-...e farm at Mehndibagh on the ...of Lucknow. The story is not all ...ommon and would not have ...d anything more than local ...except that one of the widows is ...Pradesh Home Minister Swaroop ...ri Bakshi. Swaroop Kumari has ...a case disputing the claim of the ...widow, Meera Sharga.

...eera herself is presently being held ...e women's ward of the Lucknow ...Hospital where she was taken by ...e after she went on an indefinite ...strike outside the chief minister's ...s protest against an attack on her ...farmhouse where she stays. Meera claims the attack was made by "hired hoodlums at the instigation of Swaroop Kumari".

Says Meera, "I was personally threatened by gangsters who attacked Kashmiri Bagh (the farm) and was told by one of them after being gheraoed that I would be shot if I dared to resist or raise an alarm, following which several farmhands were beaten up in front of my eyes."

According to Meera, an M.A. in archaeology with two teenaged sons, Swaroop Kumari and Bakshi had drifted apart before Bakshi married her in 1954. She displays Bakshi's will (signed but not registered) which clearly states that she was to receive the property and refers to her as Bakshi's younger wife.

Counter-evidence: However INDIA TODAY found that both the voters' list and Meera's M.A. final results of 1959 refer to her by her maiden name—Meera Sharga. Also, in 1961 an application was filed in the Lucknow munsif's court stating that Meera Sharga, unmarried, wished to marry B.K. Bhargava, also unmarried. Ultimately the wedding did not take place.

Speaking to INDIA TODAY Swaroop Kumari Bakshi maintained that "certain elements opposed to me are attempting to rake up a non-issue in an obvious move to blackmail me politically. The matter being *sub judice* I can say no more." She admitted that Meera, who is her cousin, frequently visited their house "but beyond that there was no link between my late husband and Meera. She was never actually married to him."

Meanwhile, Meera has sent a memorandum to the chief minister demanding police protection for herself and children at their farmhouse, disciplinary action against police officials who she claims have harassed her and withdrawal of the case registered against her soon after the farmhouse was attacked.

The Chief Minister, Vishwanath Pratap Singh, has promised an impartial inquiry into the case although not necessarily an official police inquiry. "I have other sources of investigation," he added mysteriously. While the Government inquiry is proceeding cautiously, the matter is being probed from every possible angle in the bazaars of Lucknow.

—ANAND SAGAR

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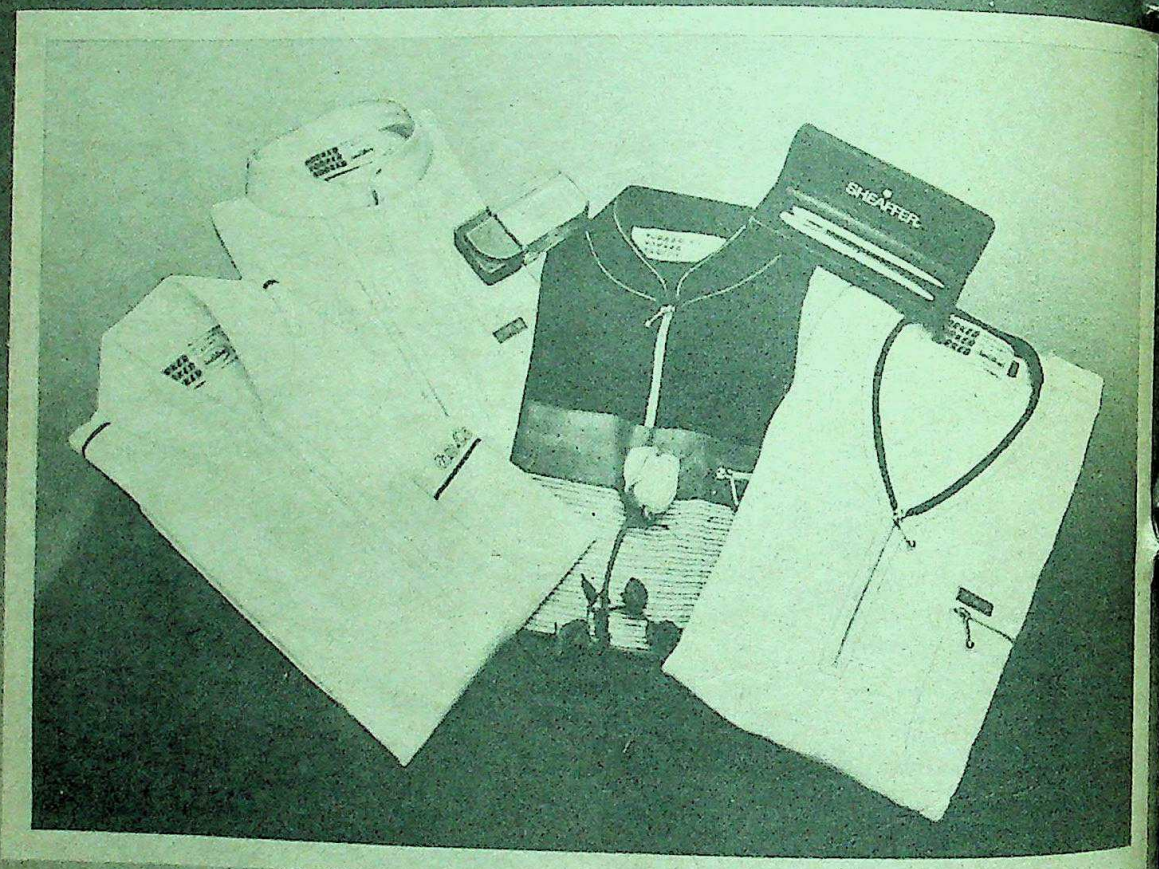

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...n Singh on the job: peripatetic

...ster installed by New Delhi whose ...in the party probably enjoy ...ularity in the state than he does ...d so, from the word 'go', it has ...t one-man race to be everywhere ...e time.

...l dailies make the effort all the ...while because they print pictures ...Singh at one function or another ...r day. Says a junior bank official ...avid follower of the news: "It is ...g the same photograph over and ..."

...tetic Politician: If there is one ...ich the chief minister cannot be ...is his incredible stamina. An ...m a press release about a recent ...e:

...chief minister will leave Bhopal ...by air on the morning of March ...Indore he will go to Khetiya, ...and Boranva villages of Khargone ...helicopter. At Sendhwa the chief ...will inaugurate an eye camp and ...the foundation stone of a market ...ipate in a public meeting. The chief ...will inaugurate the building of the ...Cooperative Bank and the middle ...Boranva. In the afternoon the chief ...will lay the foundation stone of an ...project in Dejala Dewada and also ...public meeting there. He will ...Khargone in the evening and lay ...ation stone of a new hospital, ...Udyog Bhavan, a new bus stand and ...house." All this in just one day, ...second day of the trip more or less a ...of the first.

...ther the function relates to a ...factory in Hoshangabad or a ...pool in Bilaspur or a college ...in Rewa or a cricket match in ...-Arjun Singh is always at hand. ...ith, for example, his ceremonial ...k him to the districts of Rewa, ...Guna, Gwalior, Chhatarpur, Khargone and Indore.

In a state which is five times the size of West Bengal, Arjun Singh necessarily has to rely on the state Government's two Beechcraft aircraft and two helicopters for his travels. The use of aircraft by VIPs is normally justified with the reasonable argument that their time is precious—but ironically, Madhya Pradesh's top boss saves his time only to waste it elsewhere.

Mass Base: According to the written reply to a question asked in the Assembly a year ago, in his first 237 days Arjun Singh took to the air on 208 days to make 250 trips. While the figure may be lower now, it is unlikely to be substantially so. Says Rama Shankar Singh—a former minister and the lone Lok Dal MLA in the Assembly—who asked the question: "Arjun Singh wants to have a mass base that will extend throughout the state, and hence his frequent trips. But because of its size and diversity no leader in Madhya Pradesh has ever reached that stature."

Arjun Singh, however, is certainly trying hard. If Mrs Gandhi appears to be an empress in New Delhi, he moves about like a benevolent king, promising facilities for any community he visits on the spot and earning their eternal gratitude. Last year, in the course of his travels, he promised roughly 50 higher secondary schools to the communities requiring them most urgently. Politically, seeming to be efficient is obviously more relevant than actually being efficient.

But the most appropriate ceremony Singh has performed was the one on December 17, 1981: he flagged off a Rs 1-crore project to strengthen the runway at Bhopal's Bairagarh Airport.

—SREEKANT KHANDEKAR

JAMMU & KASHMIR

Violent Reaction

ON EASTER Sunday a young Jewish gunman went berserk in the second-holiest Muslim shrine, the Dome of The Rock mosque in Jerusalem. Three days later on April 14 the entire Muslim world closed down in response to a Saudi Arabian call, to protest against the shooting. It was a gesture of solidarity intended to demonstrate Muslim outrage more than anything else, and it was peaceful everywhere except one place—Srinagar.

In Srinagar what began as a small procession turned into an explosive riot that had very little to do with events in Jerusalem. Within a short time the rioters turned parts of the town into a battleground. By the end of the day after a series of violent battles the toll was two dead and more than 300 injured, including several policemen.

Riot Scars: The town itself bore the brunt of the riot. Shops, hoardings and scooters were burnt; neon signs smashed and the premises of a bank ransacked. In the posh Maulana Azad Road area, the mob vented special fury on a huge business complex recently constructed by a Punjabi Hindu trust, which reportedly refused to have Muslims as tenants. By the time peace was restored the rioters had caused Rs 30 lakh worth of damage. The next day the Hindus downed shutters in protest.

The police were caught on the wrong foot by the turn of events. Obviously they had not expected trouble and had not even

MEHRAJUDDIN

A stripped striker being led away: mob fury

taken the elementary precautions. Says Bansi Parimoo, an eminent artist, who is a veteran of several demonstrations in Srinagar: "Even the schools and colleges were not closed till noon."

This is not the first time that such events have taken place. In Muslim-dominated Kashmir, anti-Israeli demonstrations have frequently turned violent. In 1967, in the wake of the Arab-Israeli war two churches were burnt down. But while nobody doubts that Kashmiri Muslims feel strongly about the Jerusalem shooting, it is also generally agreed that this is not the only cause of the riot. People point to the recent anti-liquor demonstrations in Anantnag where liquor shops belonging to non-Muslims were razed to the ground. The Anantnag riots are said to have been master-minded by extremist parties like the Jamaat-e-Islami, the People's League and the Mahaazi Azadi (Liberation Front).

Fiery Speech: The Srinagar riots were preceded by a fiery speech by Tajamul Islam

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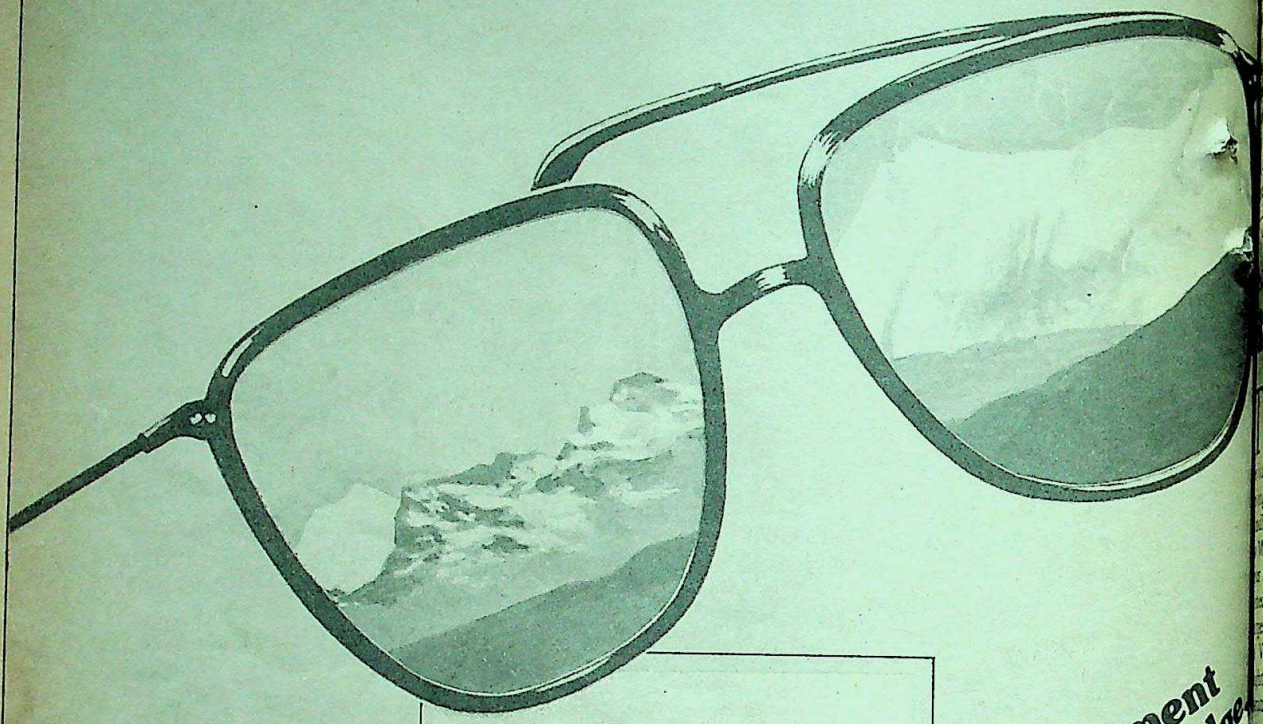
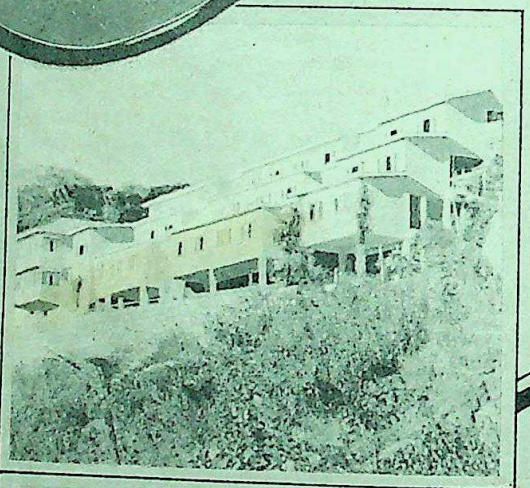
For a spectacular close-up of Mount Kanchendzonga





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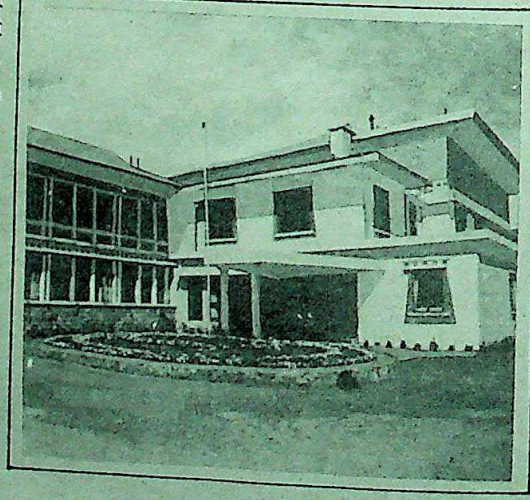

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...Jamaat-e-Islami's youth wing, ...Tulaba. In his speech Tajamul ...the US, the USSR, Israel and India ...accusing all of them of hatching ...against the Muslims.

...the extremist parties are not solely ...The politicians of the two big ...the state, the National Conference ...Congress(I) who are willing to ...depths, to outmanoeuvre each ...equally responsible for the growth of extremist parties.

Says a ruling party MLA: "They (the Congress(I)) are trying to create a law and order problem to pave the way for the Centre's intervention. They do not want an impregnable Sheikh Abdullah any more and are eager to topple him."

Congress(I) workers on the other hand deny such allegations. Says one of the zonal secretaries of the party: "The Sheikh has entered into an axis with communal forces like the Jamaat-e-Islami only to cash in upon predominant Muslim votes in the forthcoming Assembly elections."

This situation is all the more unfortunate since Kashmir has always had the reputation of being a state where the different communities have lived together in harmony. But as the events in the Valley show there can be no peace as long as there are power-hungry politicians.

—GHULAM NABI KHAYAL

...AS

...IEND IN NEED

...THE RASHTRIYA Swyamsewak ...Singh (RSS) is everybody's fa... ...ourite bugbear. So perhaps it was ...ble that it would be accused of ...g a hand in the feud between Mrs ...hi and her rebellious daughter-in-... Maneka. But though the charges can ...really be substantiated, there is a ...ction which leads credence to the ...—the friendship between Maneka ...Vasundhara Raje Singh, 29, the ...ter of Vijaya Raje Scindia, the ...ya Janata Party (BJP) leader.

...sundhara ('Vasu') became friendly ...Sanjay and Maneka immediately ...the 1980 general elections. This ...ship has become the target of much ...and Vasundhara is alleged to be ...sible for arranging the sale of ...to Sardar S.C. Angre, Vijaya ...'s private secretary, and then, th... ...the lynx-eyed Akbar Ahmed, the ...al revolt that led to Maneka's out... ...g. Reliable sources in Gwalior say ...Surya deal was thrashed out at ...d's Nainital farm by Amteshwar, ...ka, Angre, Ahmed and ...dhara.

Controversial Friendship: Vasun... ...has avoided the press ever ...the feud broke out, but she broke ...ence last fortnight when she agreed ...k to INDIA TODAY. She is upset that ...ndship with Maneka has been ...out of proportion. "I find Maneka ...ely bright, down-to-earth, and I ...y being with her," she says. She adds ...she, "found Sanjay extremely soft... ...ken, very gentle, and not rude and ...e as his enemies labelled him".

A fast-talking woman who cannot ...eal her satisfaction at the effects of ...eka's revolt, Vasundhara says she ...w Rajiv and Sonia much before she ...met the younger Gandhis. This was ...n Amma (Vijaya Raje) was in the ...ata," she says, "and I was obviously important, so Rajiv and Sonia wined and dined me. Now they do not have the courage to admit that."

Vijaya Raje admits she has met Maneka "off and on". Says Vasundhara: "Maneka has met Amma as often as I've met Mrs Indira Gandhi—at the dining table at 1 Safdarjung Road. Does it mean Mrs Gandhi has links with the BJP?" Vijaya Raje adds that she has nothing whatsoever to do with Maneka's political ambitions. "My politics will harm her and her politics will harm me," she says.

The Maneka-Vasundhara friendship provoked anger in the prime minister's household in March 1981, when Maneka chose to celebrate son Feroze Varun's first birthday at Vasundhara's, although the year-long mourning period for Sanjay hadn't ended then. Retorts Vasundhara: "We had a party at our clay mines in Mehrauli. It was so innocuous—it was my way of wishing mother and son well."

Speculative Reports: Spice was added to the Indira-Maneka imbroglio when reports speculated that Vasundhara might even marry Akbar Ahmed. Married to Hemant Singh, ex-Raja of Dholpur, Vasundhara underwent a stormy separation some years back. When asked about it, she flares up: "My friendship with Dumpy is like my relationship with Maneka. I married in 1972 and separated in 1974. I haven't got my divorce yet, haven't started proceedings, and don't intend to. If I wanted to marry Dumpy would I have remained single for eight years?"

Says Vijaya Raje: "My daughter's only crime has been to stand by a friend in need. I would not be surprised if Mrs Gandhi chose to hit back at me by egging my son Madhavrao on to embarrass me." Although that seems a convenient way of explaining the recent differences between Vijaya Raje and her son, insiders say the roots run deeper. After Madhavrao joined the Congress(I) in late 1979, his mother is reported to have sworn revenge on the people who snatched her son from her party.

BHAWAN SINGH

Vasundhara with mother Vijaya Raje: the Maneka connection

The Scindias have kept abreast of the growing tensions between the prime minister and her daughter-in-law. Vijaya Raje says: "I knew this was bound to happen sooner or later. I remember feeling shocked when Maneka was so badly treated when she was trying to release her book on Sanjay." She adds significantly: "If there was no rift between *saas* and *bahu*, do you think anyone could have stepped into the breach?"

—CHAITANYA KALBAG

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How new can a telephone system be that's made of old components?

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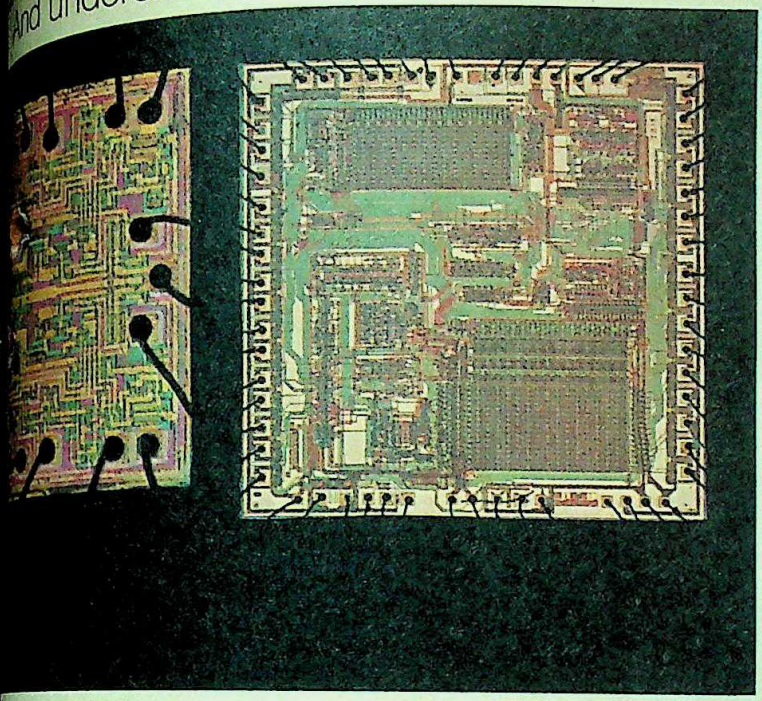

Both are chips, but the similarity ends there. The System 12 chip (right) has 11,500 transistors with circuitry on a chip only 5.9mm square.

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other Antulay?

A BIZARRE cat-and-mouse game is being played out in Bihar. The Opposition believes it has trapped another Antulay in Chief Minister Jagannath Mishra, but ruling party members, mo's men, are trying to boost his ic image. Mishra himself made a rimage to Ajmer and its shrine rning to Patna to face the oppo- ght. Last fortnight's furore was Mishra's one-time aide Paswan, the Lok Dal legislator wed to oust him by exposing his Paswan had served in his secre- en Mishra was chief minister in

Mishra: facing an onslaught

e was fuelled by the Supreme April 19 when Justices D.A. Desai Mishra allowed a special leave Paswan against rejection of his the Patna High Court in which he ged the withdrawal of the in- ihan Cooperative Bank case in chief minister was accused of use of power and financial gain of Rs 1 lakh. While allowing the petition, the judges ordered that ld come up after the summer r further hearing and directions. April 19 order was brief and ard, the two judges had said a that they were "left in the lurch" by High Court and the special judge had allowed withdrawal of the Mishra without disclosing re- grounds.

ds: Once the Supreme Court Paswan's plea almost the entire marched through the streets de- either Mishra's resignation on grounds" or dismissal of the min-

istry. Said Lok Dal chief Kapildeo Singh: "If Mishra fails to resign voluntarily Prime Minister Indira Gandhi should dismiss him." Opposition leader Karpoori Thakur, during whose tenure as chief minister the prosecution of Mishra was launched, asked his party workers and the public to gherao and hold black flag demonstrations against "this corrupt chief minister". The Lok Dal, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and other leaders queued up before the Governor demanding the sacking of Mishra.

Mishra's men tried to counter this blizzard by justifying the withdrawal of the corruption case. State Congress(I) chief Rafiq Alam and other Pradesh Congress Committee(I) members argued that the facts, the nature and the merit of the case were in no way involved in the order of the Supreme Court. They reminded Lok Dal leaders about what had happened to George Fernandes, Biju Patnaik and H.M. Patel in the Baroda dynamite case. While Fernandes had confessed his guilt publicly, both Patnaik and Patel had been indicted by inquiry commissions, they asserted.

The Government also issued a press note saying that the order of the Supreme Court had a very limited purpose and did not in any manner concern the facts or the merit of the case. Overwhelmed by the demand for resignation from all quarters, including a section of his own party, Mishra himself declared that the Supreme Court had not called into question his integrity nor passed any stricture on his government. Said he: "Even if the Supreme Court did not agree with the High Court it will remand the case to the lower court for examining the evidence afresh."

Conspiracy Alleged: According to the petitioner, in 1975 Mishra and Nawal Kishore Sinha, the then chairman of the bank, entered into a conspiracy along with others to protect Sinha and others from being prosecuted criminally for their offences of criminal breach of trust, cheating and forgery. The petition further alleged that Mishra as cabinet minister and then as chief minister had abused his position and had derived pecuniary gain to the extent of Rs 1 lakh: indulging in forgery by antedating an order by pasting it over an earlier order.

The case against Sinha and others arose when the Reserve Bank of India in its audit reports for 1972–73 and 1973–74 found a large number of irregularities and illegal practices following which the bank was superseded and the then chief minister Abdul Ghafoor ordered a criminal case filed against Sinha and others in January 1975. Mishra, who was then irrigation minister, allegedly interfered with the cooperative department files to save Sinha, and according to the confessional statement of M.A. Haidri, the manager of the bank, Mishra was paid Rs 50,000 for hushing up the case. According to the statement, Sinha spent another Rs 50,000 on behalf of Mishra for ousting Abdul Ghafoor from the chief ministership and installing Mishra as chief minister.

The cases took a dramatic turn when Thakur became chief minister. He transferred the case to the vigilance department from the cooperative department. D.P. Ojha, the then vigilance police superintendent who, Mishra's men allege, was disgruntled and motivated, rearrested Haidri, who in the course of a second confession involved Mishra. In the earlier he had not said anything against Mishra. Incidentally, during President's rule the cooperative department had reopened the entire matter and the

KRISHAN MURARI KISHAN

Paswan: friend into foe

then Governor Jagannath Kaushal had approved the prosecution of Sinha and others. Armed with a fresh confession the Janata Government launched a case against Mishra.

Case Withdrawn: But when Mishra took over again as chief minister in June 1980 he got the case withdrawn on grounds of political and personal vindictiveness, public interest, state policy to withdraw all cases of political vendetta and paucity of evidence. The High Court, while rejecting the anticipatory bail plea of Mishra in 1978 had, however, held that the case was not instituted against him out of political vendetta.

Sinha was not only protected but given the prestigious post of chairman of the Patna Zila Parishad despite allegations that he had once attempted to mortgage Patna's Gandhi Maidan and railway platform. Political observers feel that Mishra may continue for a few months more. The man who Sanjay Gandhi said would remain chief minister for 10 years now finds friends turning into foes and the ground slipping from under his feet. —FARZAND AHMED

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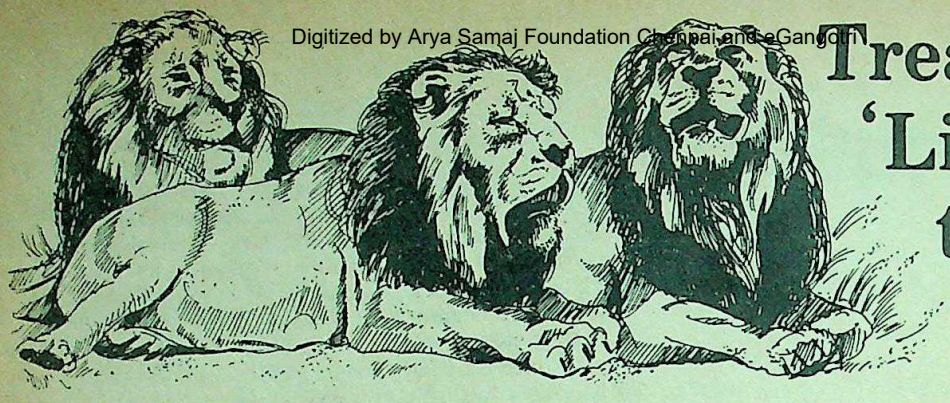

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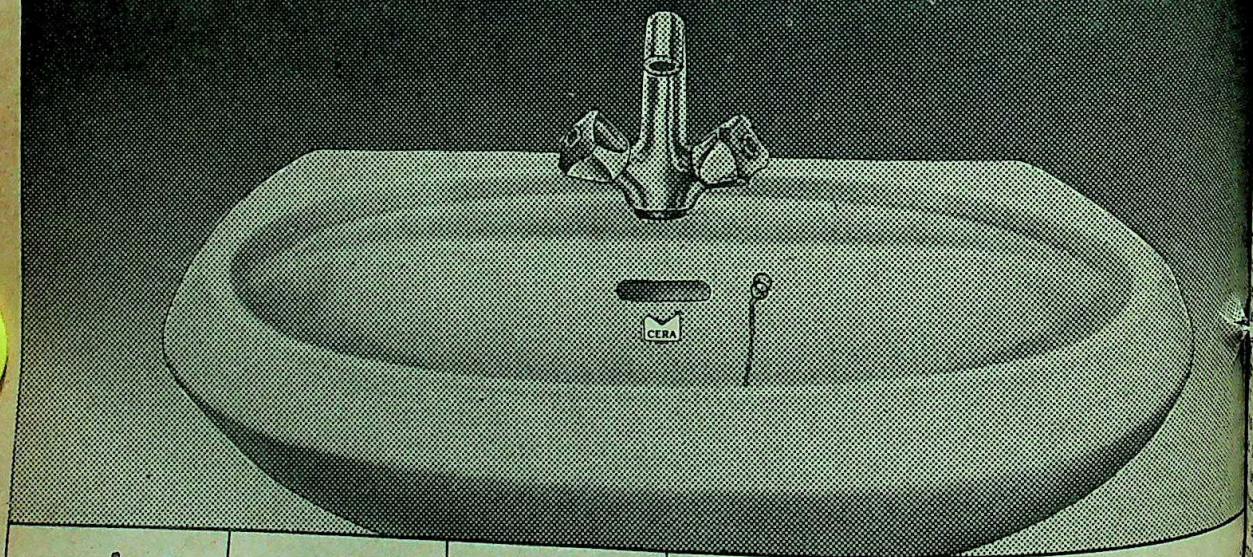

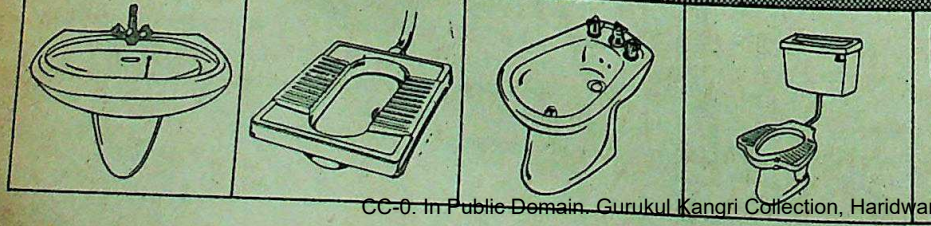

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nning The Flames

IF KARNATAKA Chief Minister Gundu Rao had played chess instead of badminton in his youth he might have handled the delicate language tussle in the state with more finesse. Instead he ted an already tense situation. ge issue recently exploded into a ation which claimed two lives in gs last fortnight.

onse to the crisis a visibly Rao told a press conference in that, after a five-hour Legislature and a two and a half hour Cabinet the Government had decided to dy of Kannada compulsory for in the state up to matriculation. Rao boasted, thereby became in the nation to make a regional compulsory subject in the school Under the new policy non- are free to take their own ngue as their first language but have to take Kannada as a second language.

ver, by this decision Rao appears imated himself. Not only has he recommendation of a committee by his government to make the sole first language—a ation which Rao had earlier in toto"—but he has also failed to ators who demand implemenhe committee's report. Last fort- All Karnataka Kannada Action announced that it rejected Rao's ck, stock and barrel" and would agitation "till Kannada gets the ion in the state".

Dispute: The present agitation for has its roots in a controversy that ven years ago during the chief p of Devraj Urs. Urs had issued demoting Sanskrit from its first atus and making Kannada or all students. Many students ed to offer Sanskrit as a first in high school exams because was taught only in high schools. syllabus was elementary and it was score higher marks in Sanskrit her languages.

n Rao assumed office he restored a first language which gave his the chance to accuse him of gional bias". The charge drew blood the state's first Brahmin chief Rao then appointed a committee, by eminent educationist V.K. Gokak to study the language problem—hoping the committee would support his stand and allow him to outflank his critics. But the Gokak Committee's recommendations surprised everyone— most of all Gundu Rao. It adopted a three-language formula but recommended that Kannada be the sole first language, carrying 150 marks in examinations; all other languages offered as second languages would carry 100 marks and as third languages, 50 marks.

Delay: The committee's report was submitted in January 1981 but Rao sat on it until Urs accused him of cowardice and taunted him for inaction. This provoked Rao to declare in a Cabinet meeting held in Mysore in November that the committee report would be implemented "in toto"—the decision was reiterated in the Governor's address to the joint Legislature session on January 28.

After that Rao's chessmen decided to play their own game. F.M. Khan, an MP who has been close to Rao, spearheaded an agitation by Muslims against the Gokak Committee's recommendations on the grounds that it violated the Muslim's constitutional rights by imposing a language on them without giving the right to study their mother tongue. Other minority communities adopted Khan's line and soon Rao faced a battle from within.

In March, Rao told the state Assembly: "The committee's report is being kept in abeyance until the Government considers all points of view." Immediately the Kannada protagonists launched their agitation. The well-known litterateur Sham Baa Joshi who headed the strike challenged Rao: "If the chief minister has any guts let him implement the report." The flash-point was reached on April 17 when police fired on pro-Kannada agitators in Chitradurga killing two. Following this incident Rao hastily convened a Legislature meeting attended by 55 of 225 MLAs and got their approval for his new formula to resolve the crisis.

The explosive nature of the language issue had been anticipated. One of the main reasons why the Centre had not pushed the idea of a mid-term poll in the state was because it feared the agitation might burst into a major conflagration leading to anti-Congress feelings. The fears were confirmed when Kannada matinee idol Raj Kumar jumped into the fray and inspired his fans to go on a rampage in Bangalore which resulted in the burning of at least 50 vehicles.

Matinee idol Raj Kumar (circled) heading a language protest in Bangalore: explosive issue

But even if Rao's formula is ultimately accepted it will be hard to put into action. The 35,143 primary schools and 2,334 secondary schools in the state do not have enough Kannada teachers to implement the new policy. Rao has promised to appoint 5,000 teachers within two months to meet the shortfall. Moreover, by making Hindi an optional language—which in the south means making it as good as defunct—Rao is likely to incur the Centre's wrath. The fury of the Kannada chauvinists continues unabated. The issue is heading for a stalemate and, while in chess this may mean a draw, in politics it might throw Rao off the board.

—RAJ CHENGAPPA

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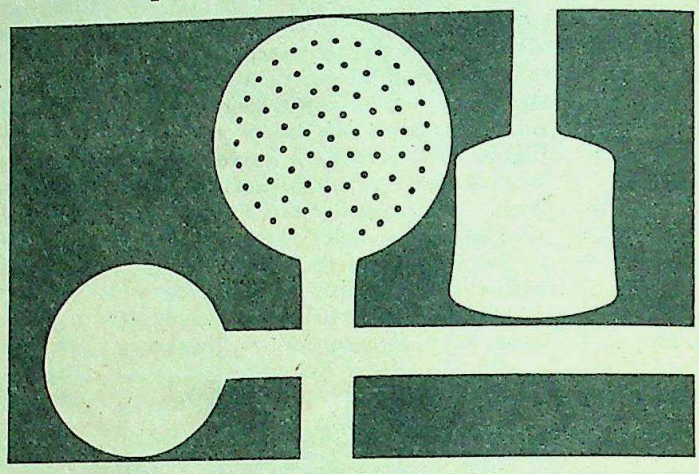

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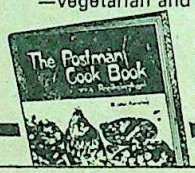

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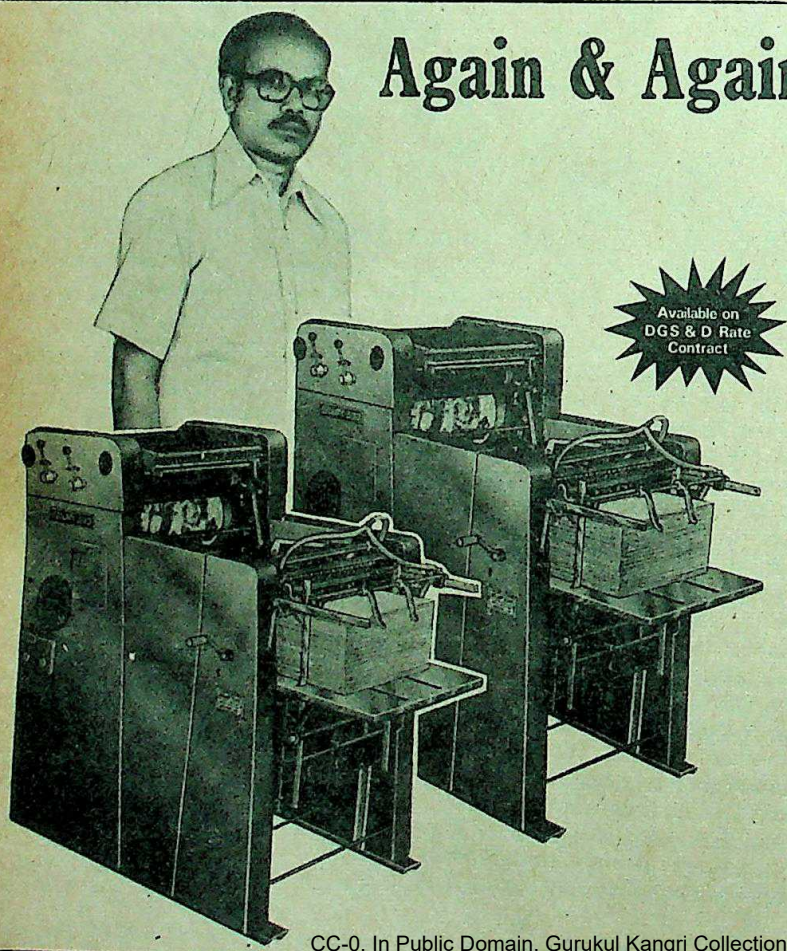

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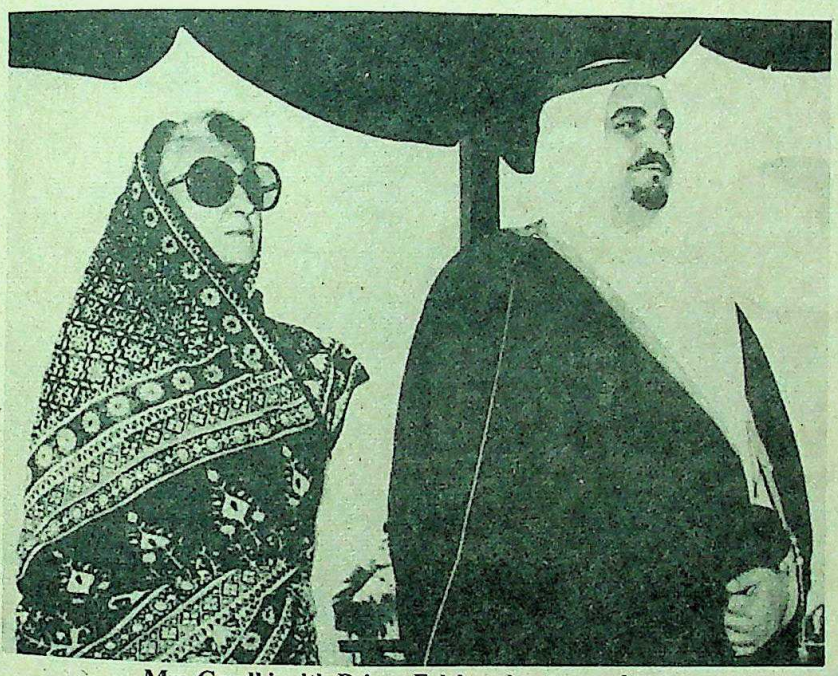
...NDHI

...ccess In Saudi Arabia

THE measured strains of *Jana ...na Mana*, the Indian national ...them, drifted out across the desert ...ey appropriately set the tone for ...'s four-day visit to Saudi Arabia ...ght. The anthem was played to ...and a lot of effort had obviously ...s rendition, which was not to be ...ch performance during the visit. ...ded Crown Prince Fahd, the ...st powerful man in Saudi Arabia ...g Khaled, was waiting at the foot ...p even before the Air-India jumbo ...oothly to a halt, ...d by an impres... dressed in ...hite robes em... in gold thread. ...Gandhi, ever the ...e politician, ...d with the usual ...e dons on visits ...d emerged dress... ...ed green cotton ...her head covered ...g a full-sleeved ...n keeping with ...tion. She also ...pped her usual ...aking hands in ...the more demure ... These gestures ...y appreciated by ...the distinguished ...g of sheikhs and ...s of the Saudi ...rces. As an aide ...d to Mrs Gandhi: ...e Saudi Arabia ...meet you."

...rate Welcome: It was, quite li... red carpet welcome for the first visit ...ian prime minister in over a quarter ...ury; and the differences in the ...s afforded earlier to the father, and ...daughter, were as marked as they ...ative. King Khaled's personal ...ght, bullet-proof Stutz embossed ...royal emblem in gold wafted Mrs ...from the airport reception to the ...ed marble Guest Palace nestling ...art of the bustling capital. Officials ...d that these were the tightest secu... ...gements made for a visiting digni... ...curity men toting machine-guns ...the entire reception area and the ...of the airport building. ...e were other, less significant firsts ...The official delegation accompany... ...prime minister was introduced to non-alcoholic beer to go along with the Arab, French and Continental delicacies prepared for it. But that, not surprisingly, did little to give any of them courage enough to consult the prime minister on what she proposed to wear for the 'women only' dinner hosted by King Khaled's wife. They even went to the extent of finding out what British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had worn during her visit, but eventually chickened out and stood helplessly as Mrs Gandhi swept by imperiously, dressed exactly as she had intended—in a sari and long-sleeved blouse.



Mrs Gandhi with Prince Fahd: red carpet welcome

Solid Results: But stripped of the glittering receptions and the effusive welcome afforded to the Indian prime minister, the real success of the visit was contained in the confidential meetings between Mrs Gandhi, Fahd and King Khaled. According to sources in the prime minister's party, the achievements were considerable and are destined to drastically alter the economic and political fabric of the region. They are:

► The erasure from the Saudi mind of the popular myth that Muslim minorities in India were being discriminated against. To emphasise the point, Mrs Gandhi's carefully-selected delegation consisted of two Muslim ministers and four Muslim secretaries of various ministries.

► The promise that Saudi aid to Pakistan for arms purchases would henceforth be restricted to items like armoured personnel carriers, trucks and small arms.

► The successful convincing of the Saudis that India was fully reconciled to the existence and stability of Pakistan and that induction of sophisticated weaponry of the calibre of F-16s would inevitably trigger off a new arms race in the region.

► The official recognition by the Saudis—for the first time—that India with its size, economic base and political stability is an effective bulwark against superpower manoeuverings in the area.

► The unofficial agreement that Saudi Arabia will use Mrs Gandhi as an emissary to carry a message to Moscow when she visits the Soviet capital in June. The message she will carry is that the Saudis will ensure that interference from Pakistan in Afghanistan ceases if the Soviets agree to withdraw their troops. Riyadh is also keen to re-establish diplomatic ties with Moscow in the face of increasing suspicions regarding the US. Mrs Gandhi will test Soviet waters in this regard as well during her visit, on behalf of the Saudis.

► Verbal agreements that the Saudis will divert some of their petrodollars held in US banks to couple with Indian expertise for setting up joint ventures in Saudi Arabia; also the promise of liberal investments in India if they get the right terms and higher interest rates than those that exist.

► The agreement that Saudi Arabia would persuade OPEC to reconsider India's aid recipient status in the light of its large oil imports and low per capita oil consumption—a factor that OPEC has so far not recognised, thus placing India in a low priority category of aid recipient nations.

► For the first time the Saudis agreed to replace the ad hoc system of supply of crude oil to India with a regular, long-term supply.

The Saudi rulers also assured Mrs Gandhi that they had no intention of leasing bases to the US for its Rapid Deployment Force and had already made this clear to President Reagan. They also indicated that they would not join the "strategic consensus" currently being proposed by the Reagan Administration. Summing up the visit, a top Saudi official remarked admiringly: "What President Zia has not been able to achieve during his 17 visits to Riyadh, Mrs Gandhi has done in just one."

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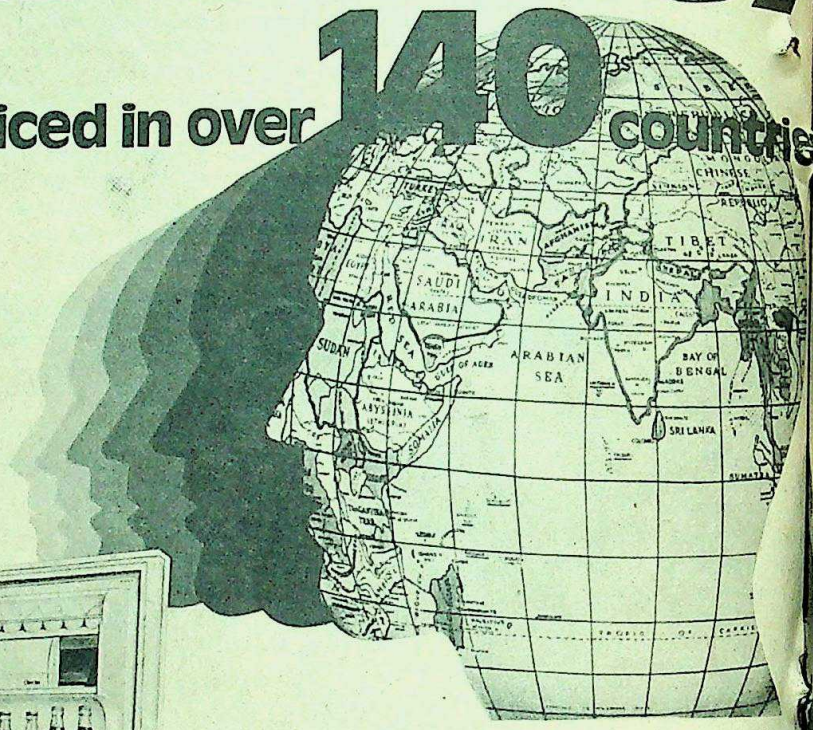

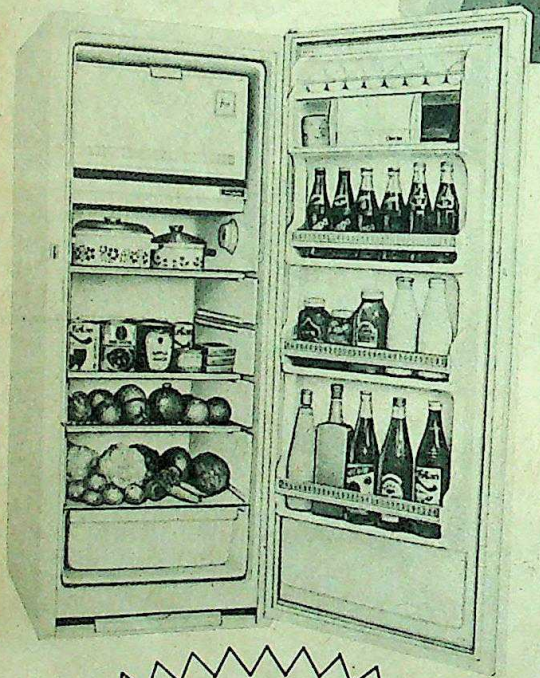

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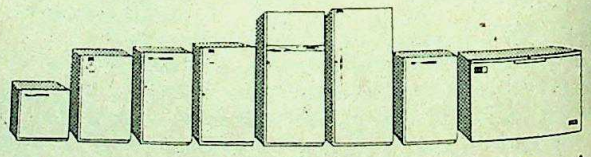

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CALL TO ARMS

■ As Britannia tries to rule the waves once again around the Falkland Islands, and United States Secretary of State Alexander Haig sets a new record in shuttle diplomacy, and Maggie Thatcher goes jingo, jingo, jingo, Indians back home are adding to the excitement in their own humble way.

A classified advertisement in *The Statesmen* of Delhi, obviously inserted by a fellow with a yearning for the Raj that

once was, offers support to Maggie, Alexander and Prince Andrew. It begins on a thrilling note: "Falkland Islands expeditionary force of the defence of the beloved empire league is being planned for early sailing."

Of course, an expeditionary force without people is not cricket, what?—so "volunteers required—either a good WOG background or retired defence personnel with assault experience preferred." Lest the prospect of a refreshing battle does not enthuse everybody, the advertisement ends with enticing bait: "Success means an invitation to stay permanently." Now the Empire can really strike back.

CANINE CAPER

■ A dog is a man's best friend. And 12 dogs are better than one. Putting these two aphorisms together, an army colonel had a bright idea. His aged mother was living in the annexe of Meerut's Patiala House, but the quarters had been allotted to a Congress(I) legislator. Sure enough, the legislator arrived with a posse of two do-

zen supporters to evict the old lady from her house.

The colonel heard of this atrocity and rushed to the spot. But all his pleading was in vain as the representative of the people refused to vacate. The colonel beat a tactical retreat, rounded up a few army men in mufti and a dozen well-trained dogs and launched his counter-attack.

Politicians can withstand the people, courts, corrupting charges, but not dogs. Then canines flashing, their muscles heaving, the dogs hurtled into the house. Human cries and teeth-clicking ensued and soon the balmy air of Meerut was filled with dust as 25 full-grown males headed for the hills with 12 dogs close on the heels of the pack. The colonel was left in complete possession of the field.

ETERNAL VIGILANCE

■ If the citizens of Bangalore were to follow the new programme of Police Commissioner Nizamuddin to bring down the crime rate, the scenario can easily be envisaged. The householder, an alarm whistle dangling from a cord round his neck, will put jewels and keys behind a dictionary on a bookshelf, shifting the jewels—or, better, the dictionary—every day. He would sleep with a potentially noisy bucket next to the door, making himself doubly secure by putting heavy furniture against it.

He would set his alarm for 2 a.m., because that's when he must get up to keep a watch on those hordes of watchmen and 'coolies' waiting, waiting, waiting to assault his fortress. He would throw his family pictures out of the album and replace them with those of the jewels. And, in the morning, he would get up ea-

rly to go for a bracing run, a warm-up for those lessons in self-defence.

Not surprisingly, Nizamuddin's constructive suggestions have not evoked an eager response. One householder remarked: "At this rate we will be keeping watch while the police sleep snugly in their rooms." Another sagely suggested that the heat wave might have had something to do with it. Or was it April Fool Day?

WAR-DANCE

■ Put a sword into a man's hand and there's no telling what he'll do: go out into the wide world and start conquering it or, in frustration at being balked by civilised mores, wave it around at everyone in sight, putting the fear of God into their timid hearts. This is exactly what a Nihang Sikh did at a Chandigarh crossing last fortnight.

He began by drawing his

weapon with a menacing flourish. Two girls were passing by on a scooter and the Nihang, scandalised by this unseemly behaviour, charged. Shrieks and squeals followed, the scooter screeched into a U-turn and the girls escaped by the breadth of their coiffeured hair.

Two constables had seen the war-dance, but before they could act, the Nihang was off again, this time straight at a family on another sc... The wife and two children ... a graceful dive off the pill... were replaced by the Niha... and the man took off acco... panied by a very danger... individual uttering war-cr... That was as far as the Niha... and his sword got, because ... two constables took both ... rugby tackle. For want o... strait-jacket, they took him ... the police station in a ... Maybe he wanted a lift.

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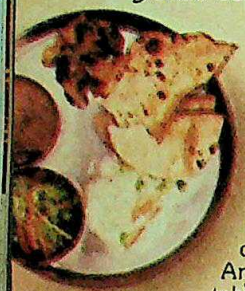

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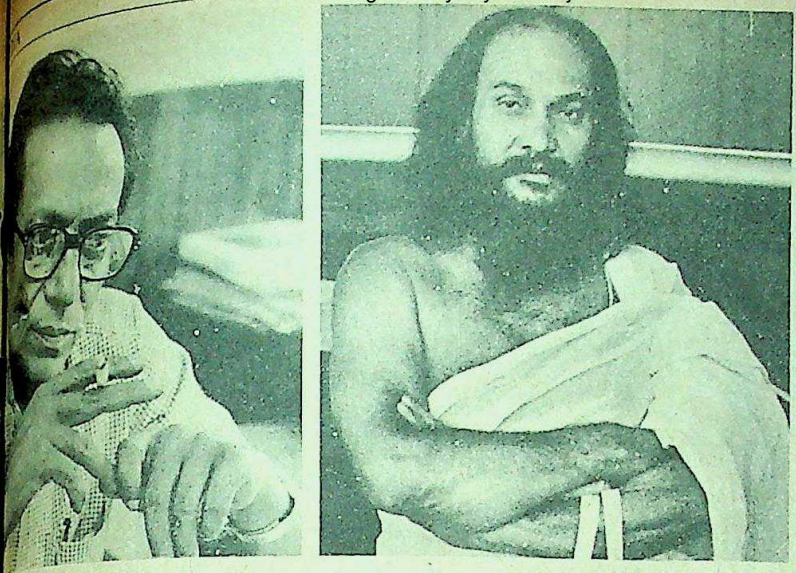

Kamaleshwar (left) and Swami Dhirendra Brahmachari: head-on collision

ESHAN

Slow Fade-out

E MEDIA's smartest masseur. The ...e-owned Indian TV's only recog... ...ed alchemist of art and propag... ...e egoist extraordinary. Kamalesh... ...he free-wheeling additional direc... ...l of Doordarshan, who had ... these sobriquets in his brief ... stint, found the authorities ...n to black last fortnight. Rea... ...he had crossed the path of ...rendra Brahmachari, the yoga ...r to Mrs Gandhi who demons... ...science on the box in a weekly ...e prime time programme. Reason ...aleshwar doggedly opposed a pro... ...fore the Union Information and ...ting Ministry, kept secret till now, ...e a few private operators to put up ...nations in Delhi and Bombay, ...ging into India the era of cable TV. ...rmer editor of the popular Hindi ...Sarika*, and a film writer with such ...nder his belt as *Mausam*, *Aandhi*, ... and *Pati Patni Aur Woh*, ...ar left the film industry to join ...an on September 23, 1980, riding ...h expectation. Vasant Sathe, the ...rmation and broadcasting minis... ...him as a "bright hope". However, ... appointment was on an *ad hoc* ...newable after a year. And Catch-22 ...here.

...year, when his file went up to the ...ister's Secretariat, she noted that ...t was a bad administrative prac... ...his appointment should be put up ...Union Public Service Commission ...e took the hint and ordered a six... ...xtension for Kamaleshwar with the ...municated verbally to him, that the UPSC would clear his appointment by then.

Axed: Came March 23, 1982, but his case was not put up before the UPSC, nor was he given further extension. However, his file did go to the prime minister's secretariat where R.K. Dhawan, Mrs Gandhi's powerful special assistant, allegedly influenced the decision to axe him. The note said "in view of the prime minister's objection to *ad hoc* appointments, Kamaleshwar should be asked to leave". To avoid the humiliation, Kamaleshwar resigned himself.

Sathe could still have saved the situation for him by extending his term for another three months and meanwhile getting him cleared through the UPSC. But he did not. Nor did Kamaleshwar's week-long effort to get an audience with either Mrs Gandhi or Rajiv Gandhi meet with any success.

His first undoing was to reverse an order by erstwhile deputy minister, information and broadcasting, Kumudben Joshi, that a TV crew must be present every morning at Mrs Gandhi's official residence to cover her regular morning *darshan*. "I found it ridiculous," says Kamaleshwar. An agitated Joshi had reportedly complained to Dhawan against "this impudent officer", but Sathe baled Kamaleshwar out of trouble.

His second mistake was to stop the Sunday morning repeat-run of the Swami's *Yogabhyas* programme, telecast every Wednesday in the widely-viewed slot between the Hindi news and the film-song sequences, *Chitrahar*. Sathe supported his view that there was no necessity to run it on Sundays, but asked him to sort it out with the Swami.

Says Kamaleshwar: "When I went to see him (the Swami), he threatened me with dire consequences." Later on Dhawan called Kamaleshwar and commanded him to restore the Sunday programme. But Kamaleshwar says he did not oblige Dhawan.

Further Trouble: He ran into further trouble when he strongly opposed a proposal, put up by a company that makes bottled beverages, to set up franchise stations in Bombay and Delhi with South Korean collaboration. Instead, Kamaleshwar pushed his idea of a second commercial channel, running for eight hours a day; it was accepted, and the second channel is scheduled to go on the air from June 1 this year. He also turned down the same company's offer to sell TV rights for the Indian performances of a London-based Afro-rock group specially invited by it last year.

The Congress(I) politician who owns the company also complained against Kamaleshwar to Dhawan. Certain people close to the Prime Minister's Secretariat were also cut up with Kamaleshwar because they had expected a cut from the Rs 20-crore franchise station plan. All these factors combined to finally seal his fate.

The Swami, however, never concealed his displeasure with Kamaleshwar. The staff of Delhi Doordarshan got used to the bare-bodied dhoti-clad Swami's regular tantrums at the studio where he called Kamaleshwar names and expressed his mind with a few telling but none-too-decent gesticulations. A few months back he flared up when Kamaleshwar tried to restrain him from dwelling at length in his programmes on such biological yet jarring phenomena as menstrual pain, leucorrhoea, even the urge to masturbate.

Shailendra Shankar, the affable director-general of Doordarshan, who is also on an *ad hoc* appointment however, said that the exit of an individual would not make any difference to the "quality, variety or efficiency" of the programmes. But few will agree with him. In 1980, when Kamaleshwar joined, the Doordarshan—in his words—"was a photo shop". It is he who gave it the semblance of a modern network, thinking up fresh human interest features, wheeling the camera out of the studios more frequently, cutting back on obligatory "VIP coverages" and generally livening up the programmes. In the process, he raised a profile that was just too high. Dhawan and the Swami—Mrs Gandhi's yogi-and-commissar duo—took aim and found Kamaleshwar a sitting duck.

—SUMIT MITRA

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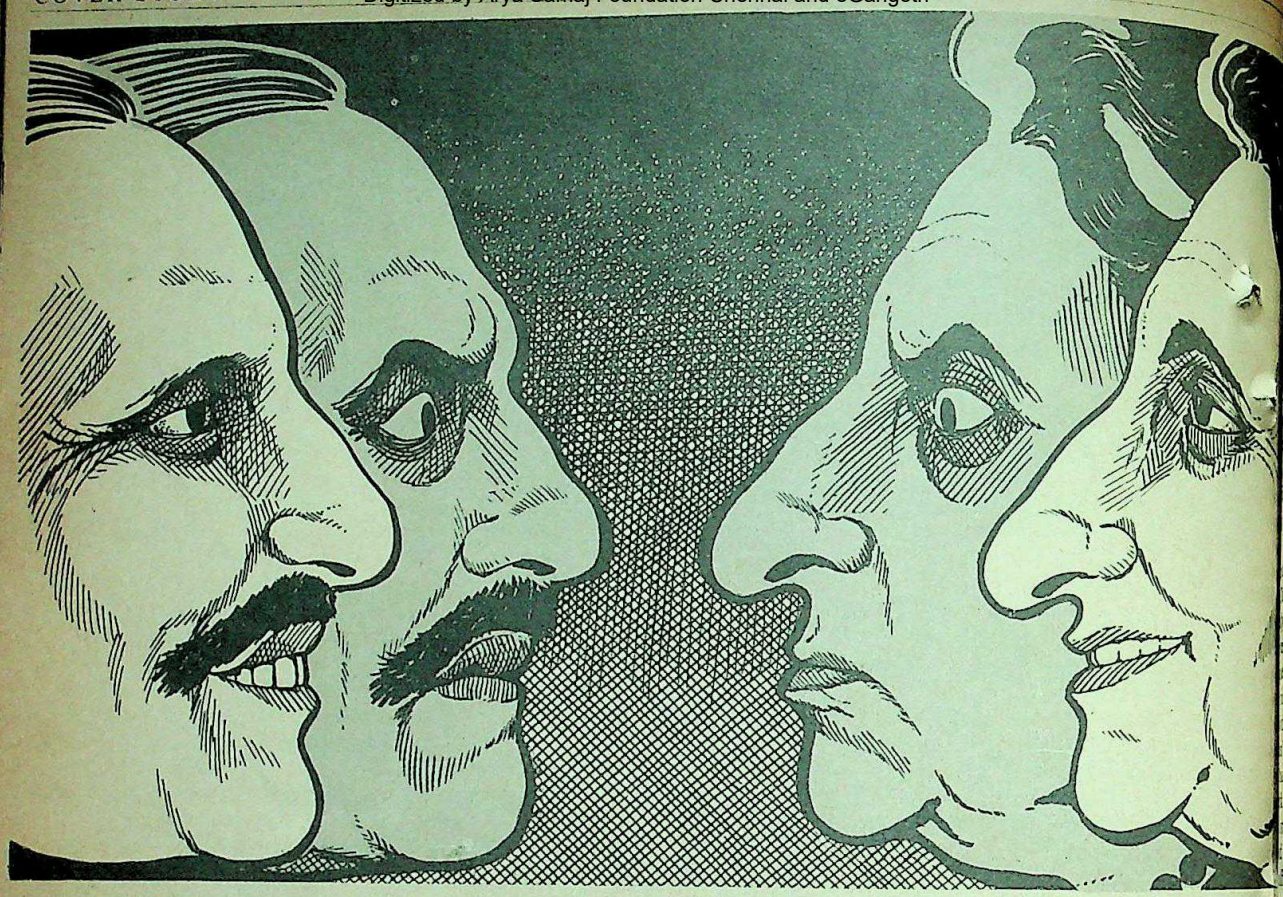

NO-WAR PACT

Double-talk Diplomacy

FOR A diplomatic pantomime that has, for three decades, yielded few punch lines, the latest tableau between India and Pakistan over a no-war pact was a familiar scenario to the vast audience on both sides of the border. The script, the lines, the actors, the props and the setting had echoes of past history. The surprise lay in the ease and rapidity with which the impromptu script of the pact disintegrated amid a cacophony of recriminations from both protagonists. The tragedy lay in the fact that, at a time when both countries are on an extravagant arms-buying spree, a no-war pact could have been the most significant breakthrough in Indo-Pakistan relations in a decade. The irony lay in the fact that the 10th anniversary of the historic Simla Agreement, the last conclave which brought peace for the subcontinent, is just around the corner in July.

Yet, if last fortnight's events were any indication, the last thing on the minds of the cast was the tentative dialogue on the pact. Mrs Indira Gandhi was closeted with Riyadh's white-robed rulers convincing them that India harboured no ill designs on its neighbours. Pakistan's new Foreign Minister, Sahabzadah Yakub Khan was wooing the Chinese leadership in Beijing at a time when relations between Beijing and New Delhi are finally at thawing point.

His Indian counterpart, P.V. Narasimha Rao, was nibbling noodles in Japan and dangling some hooks of his own for closer ties between the two Asian giants. And Zia himself, the most controversial member of the subcontinent's diplomatic quartet, was rewriting the history of Kashmir when he told veteran journalist Kuldip Nayar in Islamabad that the three northern districts of that disputed territory, Gilgit, Hunza and Skardu, were an inalienable part of Pakistan (*see interview*).

Jaundiced Views: If this didn't seem to be an exercise in confidence building between two very suspicious neighbours, it was hardly out of keeping with the disposition of the lead performers involved. Indian and Pakistani policies towards one another are basically the handiwork of just two people, Mrs Gandhi and Zia, and neither has given much evidence of being able to rise above their jaundiced perceptions of one another and get down to doing serious business. Mrs Gandhi, ever suspicious of the military dictator in Zia, remains convinced that the General is bent upon undoing the painstaking handiwork which produced the epoch-making Simla Agreement. Zia, convinced that Mrs Gandhi remains an unremitting hawk on the subject of Pakistan, finds it just as hard to overcome his fear that she plans once again to dismember the country.

Thus, the General could hardly have chosen a worse moment last month to set up a Majlis-i-Shoora, a federal advisory council hand-picked by him to give the martial law regime a public face, that he was appointing three "observers" to the Majlis from the northern areas. "Why upset a status quo that even Pakistan has respected for 35 years?" queried a veteran Indian diplomat in Pakistan.

Nor did it help matters when it appeared clear that Islamabad was [illegible]

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...Zia's remarks were an unexpec-...ture from his prepared text and ...later confirmed his view to Nayar, ...diplomats pleaded with Nayar to ...northern areas" remarks off the ...Zia asked him, Nayar says he ...complied; as it was, Nayar ...the relevant extracts in his syndi-... Later, in the course of a ...minute interview with INDIA ...over two sessions, Yakub Khan ...discussion on the northern areas ...the plea that he had to first ...Indian Government "through ...nnels" before talking to a news-...answers have yet materialised, but ...asserted that "it was not intended ...to throw into the fray another ...which might be considered ...

...Response: With that it was ...clear to even the most optimistic ...that the tentative Indo-Pakistan ...had degenerated from the sublime ...ulous. India didn't exactly cover ...glory with its clumsy response to ...original offer. In-...it persisted with its ...reaction that Zia was ...ealing an idea first ...by Nehru in 1949. ...ficials would have ef-...the clock back one ...1949 offer required ...arbitration, a ...ally buried with the ...ement.

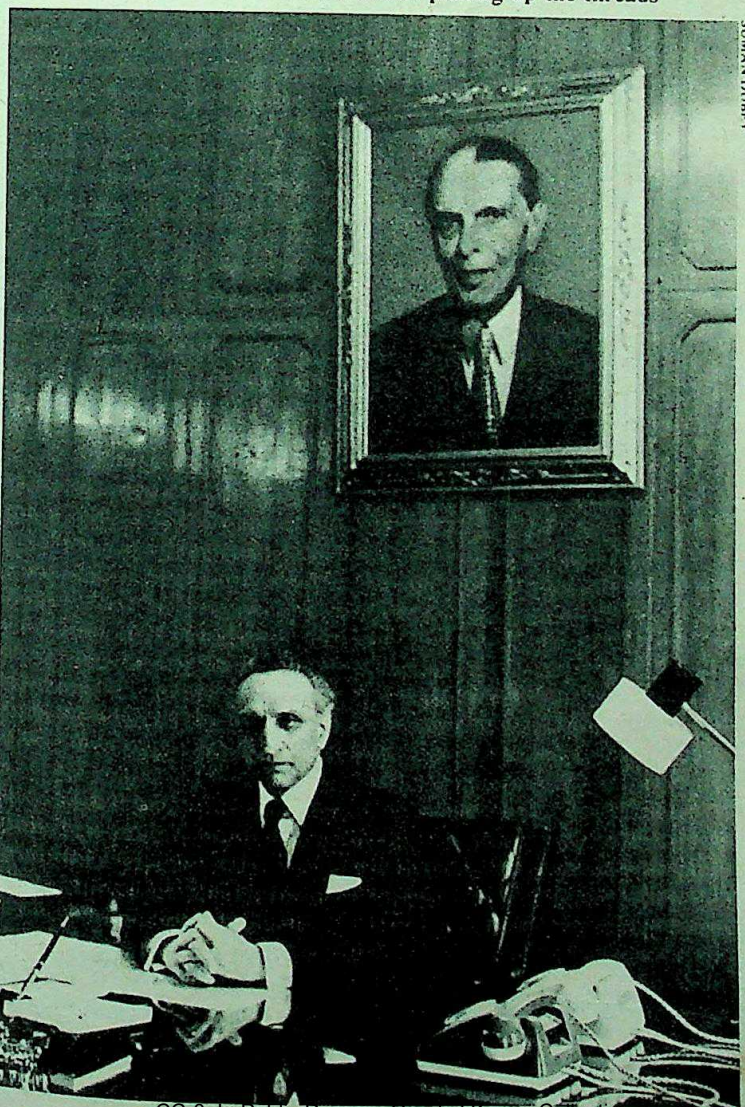
...bad enough when ...Ram Bhagat and ...Agha Hilaly—who ...the way for the ...parleys last January ...visit to Mrs Gandhi ...emissary last year—...themselves in a sl-...match befitting fish-...rather than diplomats ...Rights Commis-...Geneva. It was worse ...at Hilaly's com-...Kashmir with Pales-...mibia, India chose ...the talks indefinite-...Gandhi resumed her ...from-Pakistan re-...

...to be outdone, Pakis-...office unexpected-...town to protest at ...tributed to departing ...Ambassador Natwar ...which he allegedly be-...two-nation theory ...to advise Pakistan ...armed forces by half.

The Pakistanis didn't take time out to find out that Singh had been misquoted and that the censored Pakistani press, which tends to depict its neighbour in less than flattering terms, declined to print corrections issued by the Indian Embassy. Observed Natwar Singh wryly: "Indo-Pakistan relations are accident prone. We have to keep applying diplomatic first aid."

Complex Exercise: Diplomatic hospitalisation was what the two countries appeared to need most last fortnight as they were back to their familiar roles of blowing hot and cold on well-worn issues. "The no-war pact is beginning to look like a squash ball that has been bounced off too many walls," wryly observed a Pakistani diplomat in Islamabad. Wrote Inder Malhotra in the *Times of India:* "The prolonged negotiations, stalled since the end of February, have degenerated into an essay in scoring debating points." The two were once again viewing each other through what Yakub Khan described as "some strange refracting medium that seems to distort our perceptions of one another".

Foreign Minister Yakub Khan: picking up the threads



SUMAN DUBEY

In India this denouement seemed to confirm its worst doubts. Zia, never seen to be particularly trustworthy, simply seemed to confirm his archetypal image of a military ruler more interested in making propaganda to shore up his image at home and among his allies than in getting down to brass tacks. Did India really want to negotiate with a man who very clearly had no popular sanction and, in the process, perhaps unwittingly, prolong his undemocratic rule? Hadn't Zia told Indian journalists—for example, Rajendra Sareen of Public Opinion Trends (POT) on June 7, 1981—that the "Simla Agreement provided an adequate and comprehensive framework for the normalisation of Indo-Pakistan relations"? Why was he now so keen on a brand-new no-war pact which, as he had once told INDIA TODAY (February 16-29, 1980), was "not worth the paper" on which it was written?

If Zia was really so concerned with tension on his Afghan borders, why hadn't he moved even one military unit off the calm and undisturbed Indian border to keep the peace following the huge influx of 2.6 million Afghan refugees or guard against military incursions from a regime Pakistan refused to acknowledge? Hadn't Mrs Gandhi's special emissary Sardar Swaran Singh, as long ago as late 1980, made it clear that India had no interest in creating difficulties for Pakistan and would look the other way if the troops manning the Indian border were thinned?

Above all, doubts came frothing to surface that Zia's position on Kashmir was hardening and that he was using the cover of the no-war pact negotiations to present India with a *fait accompli* of integrating the northern areas and tossing the dispute back into the international arena in spite of the Simla Agreement which describes it as an issue to be settled purely bilaterally. And, if Zia was making capital out of the negotiations, what guarantee was there that once he had a no-war pact under his belt he would not simply turn his back on everything else: the joint commissions, trade, cultural agreements, and the entire diplomatic paraphernalia that usually ties two neighbours trying to be friendly with one another.

Doubts can obviously be contagious, and some of these

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ideas were also riding high in the minds of Pakistani diplomats who, watching the fragile Indo-Pakistan dialogue crack, were trying to read the pieces. In background briefings and formal interviews, officials in Islamabad's imposing foreign office spelt out what can only be described as the moderate line, in contrast with the harder positions outlined by Zia. The arguments are on one point, at least, unequivocal. Pakistan is feeling its way towards a new agreement that will commit the two countries to abjure force.

THE MAN who fields the formal questions in the foreign office, newcomer Yakub Khan, does so with a dexterity which belies his newness to the job but speaks eloquently of his 10 years as ambassador in some of the world's toughest capitals (INDIA TODAY, March 31, 1982). Sitting in a period chair, a benign depiction of Pakistan's founder Mohammed Ali Jinnah gazing serenely from a wood-panelled wall, the nattily dressed Yakub Khan gesticulates agitatedly with carefully manicured hands as he strikes a conciliatory note from the start. His first remarks on Pakistani soil on replacing Agha Shahi were to outline the importance of India in his scheme of things. The collapsed dialogue over the no-war pact is his first, abrupt test.

"The no-war pact endorses and reaffirms the position stated in the Simla Agreement," he says in carefully measured tones, feeling his way with care. "It is obviously a desirable end to pursue at a time when tensions and suspicions in our region have reached a high point." Asked why there is any need to duplicate the Simla Agreement at all, Yakub Khan bounces back more quickly, "What, the question could be asked, what would be the disadvantage of such a pact even if it is a reinforcement position that already exists? I find it to understand what the reasons could being suspicious, for regarding such gestion with suspicion."

Yakub Khan agrees that a no-war without progress on other fronts—cultural exchanges, trade—would tile aim. "In fact, as you know, the commissions would be tackling just What we would not like to see happ substitution of the no-war pact by joint commissions. We think the two complement each other. In fact, our is that the signing of such a pact would conditions which would be more hensive and deeper on other fronts pelling, dissipating the clouds of which at the moment seem to haunt quarters."

INTERVIEW

'The Ball Is In The Indian Court'

IF PAKISTAN is an irritating enigma to most Indians it is partly due to the schizophrenic personality of its military ruler, General Zia-ul-Haq. Zia's oft-repeated habit of holding out olive-branch offers in public statements and then making what seem outrageous and unpalatable claims regarding India and Indian territory are legendary. A man who can be as charming as he can be autocratic and vengeful, Zia nonetheless sits firmly in Pakistan's saddle. Last month, Zia was grilled in Islamabad by veteran journalist KULDIP NAYAR *on Indo-Pakistan relations with particular emphasis on the state of the no-war pact. Extracts:*

Q. *When I met you last in March 1980, the Russians were already in Afghanistan and I had suggested that India and Pakistan should go in for a no-war pact. You had dismissed it outright saying such pacts were not worth the paper on which they were written. Just about a year later you came up with the no-war pact proposal yourself. How do you explain this change?*

A. I did say then that the Simla Agreement is basically a no-war pact and if we follow it in letter and spirit we should live in peace. Generally such proposals come from a superior. There was no such proposal from India. If the Soviet Union proposes a no-war pact to Pakistan, I can see the logic. We are a small country but I had no fear (of an attack) from India. We thought if we are sincere and follow the correct path, there will be peace. The first no-war pact was proposed by the Quaid-i-Azam even before Pakistan was established on July 23, 1947 when he said, "We hope that the two countries live in peace and we hope that we will not have to resort to war and killings." This was followed up by Pandit Nehru and by some others and then finally I suggested it myself.

My suggestion was based on [illegible] revelations. I was told that India [illegible] that Pakistan will attack. I asked (Indian Foreign Minister) Narasimha Rao [illegible] and he said, "We fear that you are going to attack." Sardar Swaran Singh too said, "You are going to attack." Then I met some others and they too said the same thing. I made enquiries through my emissaries and discovered that India has genuine fears that Pakistan, after acquiring those 40 F-16 aircraft and some other equipment—which is comparatively nothing—may like to indulge in an aggression exercise again.

When I learnt this I said all right, if this is the case here is my reply: in all sincerity Pakistan offers a hand of friendship. I also wanted to see how sincere India was in offering the original no-war pact. That is how I offered a no-war pact. This is the reality.

Q. *There is a general impression in India that you want to attack India one day but you are not in a position to do that this time because the army is*

President Zia: "offering a hand of friendship"

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...ategic Connection: Still, he is not yet ...to take up Mrs Gandhi's offer of a ...treaty. Mrs Gandhi, says Yakub ...brought up the idea of a friendship ...journally with Pakistani journalists ...India. "Next day we were told official... Mrs Gandhi had mentioned this ...because a Pakistani journalist ...to the Indo-Soviet treaty. As ...the Indo-Soviet treaty has mi... ...reflecting a strategic connec... ...the signatories. Indo-Pakistan ...have a different context. A non... ...treaty could be given a number of ...can be discussed. The substance ...ement is much more important ...time."

...significant that, as the fortnight ...close, it was Yakub Khan, a man ...took a promising military career ...accept what he saw to be his country's wrong policies in erstwhile East Pakistan in 1971, should have taken the initiative to try and resume the dialogue. Pakistani officials gave the impression that while they did not want to seem to be over-anxious or over-zealous, they were keen to see the no-war pact through. "The ball is in Delhi's court," said one. Yet, only days later Yakub Khan had written to Narasimha Rao saying that he wanted to continue with the talks on the basis of the February I communique issued after the first round of talks, an initiative which saved India from having to find an opportune excuse to resume the dialogue.

There are good reasons for Pakistan's persistence. The strategic view from Islamabad is far from reassuring. To the far west, Iran's Islamic revolution has apparently stabilised but with Ayatollah Khomeini's regime far from secure, and the superpowers hardly reconciled to its peaceful existence. the country remains in an unpre-

Mrs Gandhi with Bhutto at Simla in 1972: a path-breaking pact

...*strong. The belief is that by offering ...-war pact you are only biding for time ...that once you get the military equip... ...from the United States, you will ...k India.*

...You assess a potential aggressor ...by his intentions but by his capabili... ...India should not worry about Zia... ...'s aggressive designs and inten... ...but think about Pakistan's capabili... ...Let an independent analyst assess ...military capabilities of India and ...tan. If he says that Pakistan has the ...bility of attacking India, I will resign ...commission. I have never said so in ...e but I am saying this to you. How ...erybody think that today or after ...ears or after the induction of these ...-16 aircraft Pakistan will acquire the ...bility of going to war with India ?

Q. There are some Indians who think ...once Pakistan engages itself in a war ...India, every country in the region ...ming with Saudi Arabia will lend a ...hand to Pakistan. Collectively, ...grouping will be stronger than the ...

...But war is fought with equipment. ...grace of God, Pakistan enjoys a ...good reputation in the Muslim ...particularly with our neighbours ...the Gulf. God forbid another war ...een India and Pakistan. But I am ...that if any difficult situation arises ...Pakistan, we will have unrestricted ...ance and help from the Muslim ...d. But if I go to war with India, ...would like to have replacements for ...anks and so on. Instead, if some... ...says here's hundred million dollars, ...money is good for nothing.

Q. *But some of them do have equipment. Saudi Arabia does.*

A. Saudi Arabia has equipment which has no compatibility with our equipment. So, all of a sudden I cannot have the French Army coming to fight for Pakistan! This allergy of Pakistan is unnecessary. Pakistan has no capability and I am confessing it. Even if we do... We have fought three wars. I will not go into the reasons or who started those wars because we can talk till the cows come home. If we have correctly analysed lessons of those wars, then for the fourth time we should be sitting across the conference table rather than facing each other with tanks, guns and aircraft.

Q. *Let's assume that both countries agree and sign a no-war pact. What next?*

A. If the document is signed with the spirit of not resorting to arms, things will follow logically. We will never ask how much military equipment India is getting from Russia. We hope India will not have the suspicion that Pakistan today has got two aircraft from France and will go to war with her. The spirit of such an agreement should also be seen in the minds and hearts, in the understanding and trust.

Q. *Talking of trust, one finds that of late the contacts between the two countries have been decreasing.*

A. I differ. In the last year and a half, I have increased them again, unilaterally. Look at the traders, educationists, journalists and sportsmen I have sent to India.

Q. *The Indians are issuing one thousand visas a day as compared to just a few you are issuing. The Indians say that whenever they want to bring some cultural troupe, it is not quite welcome.*

A. I am the man responsible. I myself am fond of Lata Mangeshkar but if you want to send her to Pakistan to sing, I'll say not now because it is not compatible with the current Pakistani spirit.

Q. *Will you accept a Punjabi cultural troupe that performs Heer Ranjha?*

A. Anything in which women are found singing and dancing is not acceptable to Pakistan under the present circumstances. Look at who we have sent: Noor Jehan, Mehdi Hasan, the Sabri Brothers and so on.

Q. *What about trade? You had said last time that the balance of trade was unfavourable to Pakistan.*

A. In this case, the ball is in the Indian court. We are waiting for your response.

Q. *In his Geneva speech, Agha Hilaly should not have gone to the extent of comparing Kashmir with Palestine and*

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dictable limbo. Across the border in Afghanistan the presence of Soviet troops is far from reassuring even though a political settlement with the Babrak Karmal regime could be had for the asking and the Soviets are unlikely deliberately to provoke a greater sense of insecurity in Pakistan. Yet, the gnawing fears persist: people close to the martial law regime speak of the Soviets training legions of young tribesmen from among the Pathans and Baluchis for possible subversion of the country's sensitive western tribal reaches.

Sensitive Border: "All of a sudden, our entire western border has come alive," says retired brigadier Noor Hussain, director of the nine-year-old Institute for Strategic Studies. "If that doesn't shake the policy makers in the Indo-Gangetic plain, then I don't know what will. What you don't seem to realise is that the Soviets are in the traditional security zone of the subcontinent, yet the same psyche seems to be at work as when the invaders of the past came through the Khyber Pass."

And, from the verdant avenues of Pakistan's tidy capital—which one journalist says consists of bores, bureaucrats and boulevards—the view towards India isn't particularly reassuring either. After two wars, each of which paved the way for the dismissal of a military regime, Zia knows that he has neither the military muscle nor the industrial might to wage war with India. The F-16s notwithstanding, Pakistan's overall punch—military and economic—would eventually be no better than a temporary lurch in comparison with the weight of India's military and economic might.

Even though in strictly mi terms there is rough parity on the long Pakistan border, nobody is in any doub Pakistan that if a war did not fortuit end in a stalemate it would be a disaster. can't afford a war," says Tahir Ayub, of Field Marshal Ayub Khan. "It wi total ruination." Even a Zia opponent as Sherbaz Khan Mazari, lea of Baluchistan-based National Democrati rty is explicit: "Zia wouldn't be fool launch a war. Past experience teache that would be the end of his rule."

Changed Policy: Pakistan's al United States, is likely to look askance war-like adventure the Zia Governme ght have in mind. There is re to believe that the Reagan Ad stration has travelled some from the time when it whole- tedly embraced the Fukuyam port (INDIA TODAY, September 1981) and embarked on its s minded pursuit of strategic o along Soviet frontiers. S

> **"I know I cannot win Kashmir by shouting at the top of my voice. One thing that India should not forget is that the Kashmir problem has to be resolved by peaceful means. The no-war pact does not change our stand. Kashmir should be resolved in accordance with UN resolutions. The remaining problems between us must be resolved bilaterally."**

Namibia. That annoyed India and the Indian foreign secretary's visit to Islamabad was put off.

A. It seems to me that the sincerity of a no-war pact is not that visible in India. Yet, I know that a segment of the Indian public, the Indian intelligentsia, is supporting me in the sense that they would like both the countries to have a no-war pact. India reacted in a very unnatural manner to the Hilaly speech. It looks as if they were trying to find an excuse; they got it and they went to town shouting against Pakistan.

Q. In future will you agree not to mention Kashmir in international forums?

A. We have generally restrained ourselves. If I find that India is allergic to our referring to the Kashmir issue in world forums while I am trying my best to improve our relations, then I would avoid it. But if you expect that I should give a guarantee that Pakistan will not mention Kashmir, then . . .

Q. The Simla Agreement calls for bilateralism.

A. This is not the understanding on Kashmir, but on other issues. Anyway, I know I cannot win Kashmir by shouting at the top of my voice. One thing that India should not forget is that the Kashmir problem has to be resolved by peaceful means. India accepts that this is a dispute. India also accepts that it should be resolved peacefully. But they want it to be resolved in accordance with Indian wishes.

This is the difference. They do not want Pakistan to compare Kashmir with Palestine, Namibia, South Africa and so on. Being aware of this allergy, I haven't been as vocal on Kashmir during the last year or so as I used to be two years ago. I have done this on my own. But if it is expected of me that I will surrender my rights or I would give an impression to the Kashmiris that Pakistan is surrendering its right of a peaceful solution to the problem, then this is not fair. But the emphasis must be on the peaceful solution because no war can solve such problems.

Q. After the no-war pact is signed, will you agree not to mention Kashmir in outside forums?

A. The no-war pact does not change our stand on the Kashmir issue. Kashmir should be resolved in accordance with the United Nations resolutions. The remaining problems between us must be resolved bilaterally.

Q. How come you have included three observers in the Majlis-i-Shoora from Gilgit, Hunza and Skardu? They have been a part of Kashmir.

A. Yes they used to be but they do not form part of the disputed area between Indi and Pakistan. The cease-fire line is on the far side. Gil Hunza and Skardu are part the northern areas of Pakistan.

Q. When you signed a border agreement with China in 1963, India made loud protests. You never had these observers since 1947. What is the provocation now?

A. The Northern Area is not a part of any province. We have created a local commissioner which comes under the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas. When I went there on a visit the people there said, "Why have you not given us any representation?" I said, "But you are being administered directly by the Federal Government." They said, "No, we must be represented." So I said, all right. To start with, we will have observers from Northern Areas and from Azad Kashmir.

Q. The Indo-Pak talks have gone off the rails.

A. I am very hopeful that we will come back on the rails.

Q. Are you planning to take the initiative or do you expect India to do so?

A. We are expecting the Indian foreign secretary here. If he doesn't come I am prepared to send a delegation. We must continue this process.

Q. Why don't we start on this p

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Karachi's Institute of Foreign ... a recognised public platform for ... statements, US Ambassador to ... Ronald I. Spiers corrected an earlier statement last fortnight when he ... high-level Pakistani audience that ... weapons are supplied for use ... self-defence".

... Spiers had been quoted by a ... Daily as saying that the United ... imposed no conditions on the use of ... supplied. Though American assurances ... his score have in the past been ... with the paper on which they were ... Spiers did go on to say, "We are ... they would not be used for aggression ... any direction, and we do not ... that Pakistan intends to attack India ... India intends to attack Pakistan." ... a popularly held myth in ... Spiers, undoubtedly aware of Mrs ... proposed visit to Washington, said ... India and Pakistan had their ... "We do not believe that it is ... (meaning Soviet) proxy."

IN FACT, the US interest at the moment seems to be to bolster the morale and muscle of the martial law regime so that it can play a more useful role in the Gulf, an area of prime strategic interest in Washington, if it is called upon to do so. Writes Girilal Jain, "Pertinent for us is the fact that the Americans appear to have concluded that Pakistan needs assurance of security on its eastern borders in order to be able to play any worthwhile role in the Gulf." Some two million Pakistanis already work in the Gulf, sending home $3 billion a year—a sum in no mean way responsible for the relative prosperity in Pakistan, and for shoring up its import-oriented, deficit economy—not to mention the Baluchis who fight for the Oman army, the Pakistani pilots who fly fighters with an Arab flag, and the division stationed in Baluchistan for contingencies beyond Pakistan's borders.

Pakistan's alliance with the United States is far from universally welcome in Pakistan. The country's popular anti-US sentiment—expressed in a particularly ugly fashion when the US Embassy was attacked and set afire in November 1979—has been somewhat curbed by the Soviet thrust into Afghanistan. But there is resentment at the enormous influence Washington wields in Islamabad. "Pakistan foreclosed an independent policy on Afghanistan the minute we took arms from the US," complained a well known Pakistani journalist. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP), is even more forthright in its condemnation. "Zia is a stooge of Reagan," says one leader who has served time in jail. "As soon as we come to power we will

Agha Shahi and Rao at the first round of talks: off the rails

Possibly a few arms may be going in from here or there. How can America and China send arms on a massive scale without Pakistan being involved in it? Do you think 2.6 million Afghan refugees would have fled that country and the insurgency be in such poor shape if the Americans and Chinese are sending in arms? The Russians would have beaten the hell out of that.

Q. ***You have said that Pakistan has refused America's request for military bases.***

A. Some responsible people—and not the American Government—asked if we are prepared to give military bases and I said no.

Q. ***You have been constantly saying that you are committed to hold elections. But they seem to be as far away now as they were when you took over.***

A. They are still some distance away, but not too far away.

Q. ***After 25 years of martial law, the military appears to have developed some interest in the running of Pakistan.***

A. Not at all. I am witness to it.

Q. ***You may be one of the very few who are not.***

A. I know my colleagues and my subordinates. There is nobody who feels that it is his birthright to administer the country. But all patriotic people including myself feel that if this country is not following the policy of its ideology then it is as much the duty of Raja Zafarul Haq as it is of Zia-ul-Haq to see that the country is brought on proper rails. Instead of agitating, killing our own people and then imposing martial law, we should find a solution which should be according to the psyche of the people of Pakistan and should provide a constitutional means of solving political problems. That is the role that I have been trying to play.

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INDO-PAK TRADE

Imbalancing Act

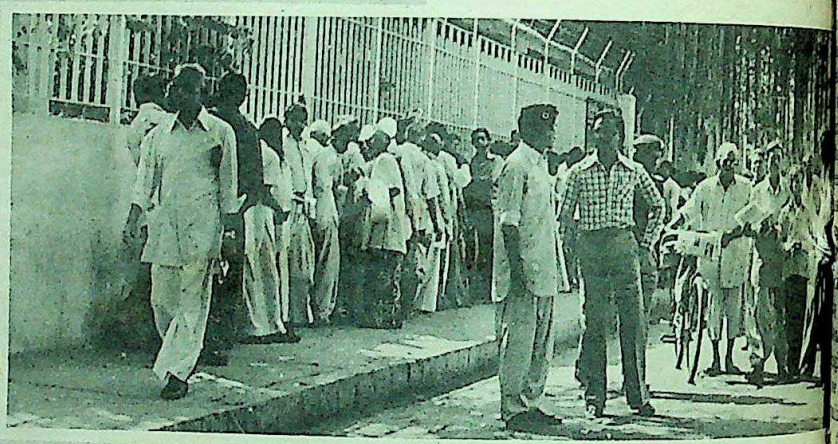
THINGS Indian these days tend to be greeted with overflowing enthusiasm in Pakistan. Last fortnight, a *mushaira* of Indian and Pakistani poets organised by the Indian consulate in Karachi was a "sell-out", with the cream of the city's society phoning in for invitations till the morning of the event. Nobody was surprised by the turnout, for the Zia Government has determined that its citizens be confined to a fasting diet of Indian culture, Indian relatives and Indian trade.

Hindi films circulate freely on video cassettes, but are officially banned in the interest of protecting Pakistan's own fledgling cinema industry. Noor Jehan's thunderingly successful Indian tour cannot be repeated the other way round by, say, Lata Mangeshkar because, as Zia says, "anything in which women are found singing and dancing is not acceptable to Pakistan under the present circumstances"—a reference to the regime's 'Islamisation' programme which keeps women under wraps. Yet Noor Jehan herself appears regularly on television, and Tunisian and Chinese dancers have had no problem finding audiences in Pakistan.

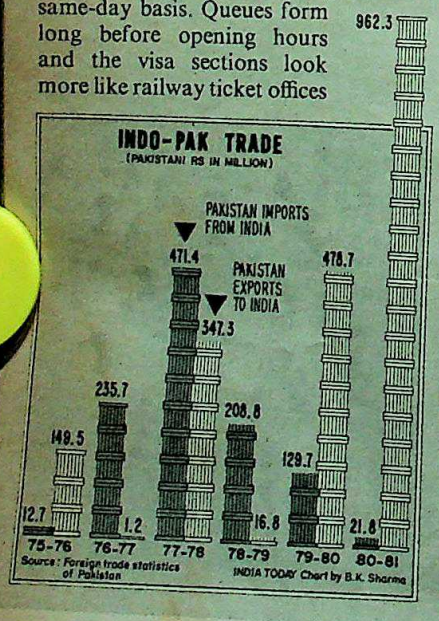
Ironically, the restraints on the Pakistani side have only tended to increase the appetite in Pakistan. India has won popular goodwill with its speedy clearance of visa applications by Pakistanis. Between the Karachi consulate and the Islamabad mission more than 1,000 applications are given on a same-day basis. Queues form long before opening hours and the visa sections look more like railway ticket offices than diplomatic missions. Across the border, it can take ordinary Indians weeks and months to get even routine visas. The numbers reflect the red tape. Between January 1979 and June 1981, 630,178 Pakistanis visited India compared with 242,338 Indians who crossed over.

Yet, the Pakistan authorities say they cannot make things easier because Indians tend to stay on in Pakistan, an allegation recently aired in the local media. The facts are different. Betweeen January 1979 and June 1981 overstayers were roughly seven per cent on each side: That amounted to 45,228 Pakistanis in India and a mere 18,302 Indians in Pakistan.

Pakistan's case isn't much better on trade. The Simla Agreement obliged the two countries to work towards buying and selling with one another. Indeed, in 1975 a three year trade pact was signed which saw two-way trade rise to Rs 80 crore in 1978-79. Since then Pakistan's imports have nosedived and talks on a new pact have spluttered out. The reason: Pakistan insists on keeping the private sector out of the game and keeps a tight leash on its buying from India. One result: Pakistani consumers have to pay more than US$1,000 (Rs 9,000) for Italian-made Vespa scooters instead of less than US$500 (Rs 4,500) for an identical Bajaj model. The Bajaj example is duplicated in a whole range of products which could help diminish Pakistan's huge perennial trade deficit. The advantage would be mutual. According to one estimate, trade could without much difficulty rise to Rs 250 crore—if it were allowed to.



Lining up for visas at India's Karachi consulate: unbalanced exchange



diplomatic initiative. The Soviets, now close northern neighbour, were hardly lik to view his new military toys with any favour than India—or even the Gulf co ries who can hardly be expected to rely Pakistan if it can't clear the decks with In It was not for nothing that Mrs Gan highly successful Saudi visit was viewed w alarm in Pakistan.

Popular Support: More than any the most powerful impulse that has ke Zia Government on the track of the no pact is the vast popular support for it. "I amazed," says a scholar of diplomacy. India you have open minds about every but in regard to Pakistan you don't quently draw the right conclusions. don't see the full significance of a gov ment like this one offering India a no pact. Even the opposition to this governm and its enemies have not criticised it mind boggles that the penny hasn't

recognise the Karmal regime. The So are good neighbours for us."

Perhaps Zia was paying lip-servi these sentiments when he dropped his mbshell in the Majlis-i-Shoora last mo saying that the US had asked if it co station troops and military equipment Pakistan for contingency requirem Hurried consultations with the Ameri later produced the somewhat less than vincing explanation that "certain visi and other persons who did not represent US Administration" had suggested US in Pakistan while the two countries discussing the arms package.

Zia also seemed to realise that h bought himself an impressive packag arms, he would have to make more th token declaration to smooth feathers r by his action. It was no coincidence that first talk of a no-war pact came in concluding paragraphs of a press re announcing the US-Pakistan a deal—hardly the place for a major, gen

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...a renowned columnist: "Only a ...general could have made this offer ...re accused of a sell-out."

...is more palpable in the context ...Pakistan relations than the disap- ...that the two neighbours have ...scant progress towards the pact. ...ctive of diplomacy and the com- ...agment mean little in the face of ...that seems to have come to be ...the three small words. "Does it ...price," asks the scholar tilting at ...icions of the no-war pact offer, ...undswell of a people wanting to ...ratchet?"

...is no mis- ...widespread ...feeling. It ...a thread of ...rmal inter- ...d random ...ors alike. ...ost potent ...mon peo- ...keepers, bu- ...white-col- ...s, students, ...ir relatives ...s in India, ...e who've ...there. Ka- ...an issue, ...spontane- ...exception. ...who speak ...of Pakis- ...identity or ...ings about ...box) invari- ...ify it by ex- ...their hand, ...tentatively. ...ir mood is ...moved from ...type firmly lodged in Indian minds ...orders on the incredible.

...popular self-image of Pakistan has ...formed beyond recognition. There ...talk of one Pakistani soldier being ...three Indian jawans, or a 1,000-year ...ion of avenging the humiliation of ...place there is an acute consciousness ...much smaller Pakistan is than ...unequal, suddenly, has become ...balance in the region. What seems ...cinched the change was Mrs ...re-election in January 1980, at ...same time that the Soviet forces ...into Afghanistan. "We have not ...that the last time the security inter- ...ests and the Soviet Union coincided, ...the break-up of our country," says ...politician in Karachi. The unspoken ...that the same thing might happen

Uneasy Views: The anxiety about India's intentions peppers conversations with all sorts of people. The occasional politician will argue that there is no threat from India, but enough publicity is usually given to India's arms purchases—exactly like the wide dissemination in India of Pakistan's arms purchases—to make people feel uneasy. Last fortnight, India's contract to buy Mirage fighters from France was emblazoned in all papers. Strangely echoing the suspicion voiced in India, an opposition leader asked, "Pakistan is no longer a challenge to India, but we fear who is India buying its arms against."

Zia and Mrs Gandhi at their first meeting in Salisbury: jaundiced views

Yet, evident as it is, popular Pakistani preoccupation with India is increasingly getting overshadowed by the apparent discontent with the military regime. "I am 100 per cent sure India won't come to Pakistan," says a PPP functionary. "The Simla Agreement is very clear about war. The issue is elections. I feel the integrity of my country is in doubt if people's representation isn't given." In a country where the armed forces have traditionally been held in high esteem, the open criticism of the army's domination comes as a surprise.

According to recent regulations, 20 per cent of civilian government jobs have been reserved for the armed forces—10 per cent each for serving and retired people. Last fortnight the Government told the Majlis-i-Shoora that of 42 Pakistani ambassadors abroad, 17 were from the armed forces. There is resentment that army officers are finding their way into universities, as secretaries in government ministries, and at the top of such key government corporations as Pakistan International Airlines, the state-run oil and gas concern and the Water and Power Development Authority.

Fragmented Threat: Muted though it is, criticism of the martial law regime is commonplace. Charges of corruption abound. Not that Zia faces any particular threat to his regime. The opposition parties, about a dozen of them, are fragmented and the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) is moribund. In recent weeks the leaders of the opposition groups have again been meeting clandestinely even as Zia has cracked down on dissenters (INDIA TODAY, April 30, 1982). But till the opposition parties find a resurgent leadership to capture the nation's imagination like Benazir Bhutto, who has been incarcerated in jail and in house arrest for quite some time now, or popular issues on which to throw down the gauntlet, the challenge will remain subdued.

Zia knows as much. Last fortnight, he told the Lahore Chambers of Commerce and Industry that martial law would continue a "reasonably good time" and elections would be held when the country achieves political, economic and social stability. For the moment, at least, that put the lid on any expectations that the General, who has twice gone back on his word to hold elections, might have a change of heart.

Chafing at the martial law chain that surrounds them, the political parties nevertheless are mostly solid in their support of the no-war pact. On the far right, Gafoor Ahmed, chief of the Jamait-e-Islami, a well-organised cadre-based party which is said to have a tight code of discipline, says, "I'm in favour of it. The bifurcation of the country was not meant to bifurcate hearts for ever." A middle-of-the-road grouping like the National Democratic Party is more concerned with internal problems than with Pakistan's tussles with India. "I think the no-war pact is necessary," says Mazari, adding

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the rider: "An elected government will have to ratify the pact."

Refusal: There is, however, a divergent political stream which takes a different course. "India cannot afford to negotiate with a military regime. It must wait for a democratic alternative to take office," asserts Maulana Shah Ahmed Noorani, president of the Jamait Ulema-i-Pakistan, an Islamic Sind-based party. "If something is done by the military government, the elected government would change it. The military government is not an elected government. We will not take responsibility for any pact signed by a non-elected government."

The PPP, riding a groundswell of popularity sustained by the memory of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and, ironically enough, the military government's persecution of his widow Nusrat and daughter Benazir, emphatically insists that the Simla Agreement is an effective enough deterrent for a war between the two countries. "Zia wants to push the Simla Agreement aside and replace it with one of his own making," says a Bhutto loyalist.

But however discordant the political chorus seems, ultimately, a no-war pact stripped of its hyperbole content, is as complex and paradoxical as relations between the two countries have been all these years. No leader or diplomat worth his or her salt would link a no-war pact with a mutual lowering of military guard. Similarly, Indian negotiators, present or future, will hardly settle for just a no-war pact. The basic aim, in Indian eyes, is a friendship treaty erected on the foundations of the joint commissions.

Opportune Moment: Yet this is precisely where the paradox lies. For the first time since partition, popular opinion in Pakistan and in India strongly favours a rapprochement. At no other time in the history of the two neighbours has the atmosphere for friendship and mutual goodwill been more opportune. The ball, however, is not in Pakistan's court, as Indian leaders insist, but in India's, merely by virtue of its pre-eminent position, its vast size and population and its more powerful international clout.

It is clearly time for statesmanship. If Anwar Sadat could bell the Israeli cat is there any reason why, with much less to lose, Mrs Gandhi cannot write another chapter into the sorry tale of Indo-Pakistan relations to match the achievement of the Simla Agreement? Any reconciliatory gesture will carry more weight and credibility if it emanates from the big brother. It will be viewed as an act befitting a regional power, perhaps paving the way for the ultimate goal of reducing military arsenals being stockpiled on both sides of the border. The alternative would be a mockery of diplomacy.

—SUMAN DUBEY in Islamabad

» We are for normalisation of relations with India, but we reject India's hegemonistic ambitions. We reject India's high moral pedestal, its self-righteous position. Indian policy makers are not reconciled to the existence of Pakistan. They want Pakistan to get NOCs (no objection certificates) from India all the time.

—Newspaper editor in Islamabad

» We come across so few Indians. When we meet one we want to grab him and take him home.

—University lecturer in Islamabad

» There is no use creating bitterness. There is a genuine feeling that people in Pakistan want to have close relations with India. There is no use in dissipating our energy in small things. After all, we have so many things in common.

—Engineer in Peshawar

» If India thinks it can destroy Pakistan it is quite mistaken. The Muslims have lived in the subcontinent for one thousand years and will always live in the subcontinent. India must learn a lesson from history. We've had many conflicts so it is better that we live in peace.

—Religious leader in Karachi

» India is the country closest to us. Our thought processes are the same, and we are part and parcel of the Indian system. Religiously we may be closer to the Arabs but politically we are south Asians. In my view Indians are good, and I will not be instructed by the Government.

—Politician in Karachi just out of jail

» India's interest is in a democratic government in Pakistan which will normalise relations with India. The Simla accord has, after all, prevented war for 10 years. Why should we make Pakistan a theatre of war? Why provoke the wrath of the bear?

—Bhutto loyalist in Karachi

» There is a craze for Indian films. You can buy the latest film on video cassette for Rs 300, or hire it for Rs 20 or Rs 25 for one night.

—Hindi film fan in Lahore

» Indira Gandhi's attitudes vacillate between hysteria and suspicion, qualities predominant in women. They don't make for good international relations any more than they make for good marital relations.

—Retired army officer in Islamabad

» More and more people have come to see Pakistan as part of south-west Asia and not south Asia. Pakistan is really a bridge between India and west Asia. If things don't improve with India, the trend to south-west Asia will harden. If things improve, the more natural south Asian tendency will be strengthened.

—Newspaper editor in Karachi

» The television and radio tell us that India does not want a no-war pact.

—Hotel waiter in Peshawar

» We remember the good old days in India.

—Former resident of Delhi in Rawalpindi

» I'm most strongly for a no-war pact with India. It will demonstrate that India does not want to eat us up.

—Economist in Karachi

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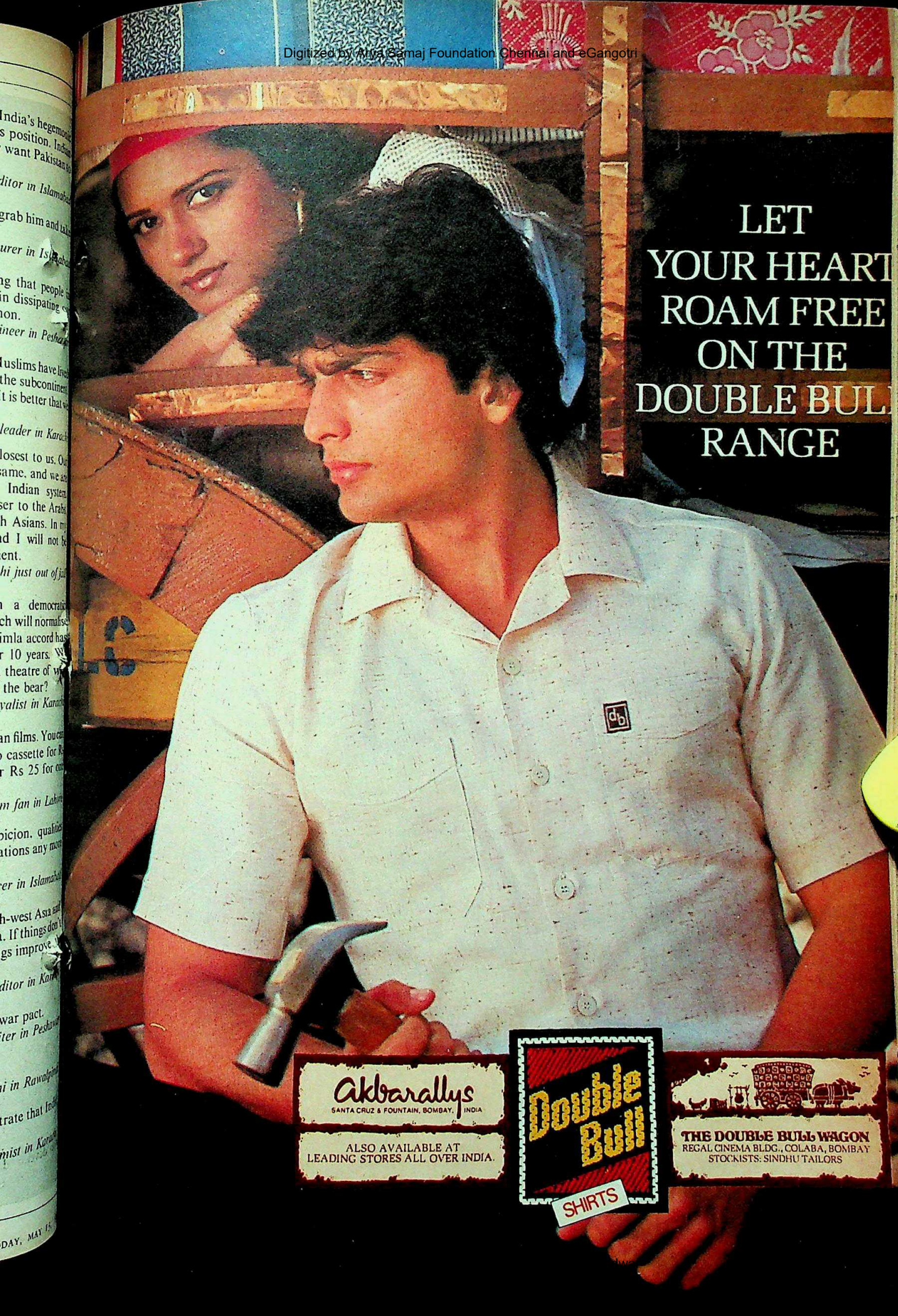

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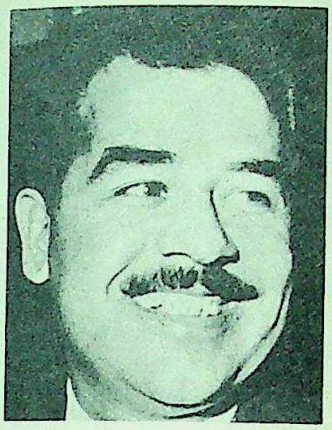


Hussein: war casualty?

...UGH Iraqi strongman ...dam Hussein is still firm-...ched in the saddle, ...intelligence agencies are ...g to talk of possible suc-... in case the current rever-... has suffered in its ...Iran forces him to step ...He has made numerous ...Iran for a negotiated ...and a return to pre-war ...status. If the war takes ...toll of men and the ...economy, say reports, ...offer to resign.

...he does, there are only ...ssible names in the suc-...takes. The front runner is Taha Yassin Ramadhan, the first ...prime minister, followed closely by Izzat Ibrahim al-... deputy chairman of the ruling revolutionary command ...and Tariq Aziz, the deputy prime minister.

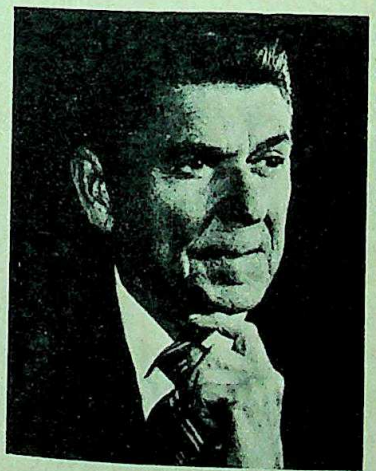
...DREN OF WAR

...UGH the fighting in Afghanistan seems to have abated ...tensity, the Afghan Army is hamstrung more than ever ...by the steady depletion in its ranks through mass de-... Last fortnight, the Government took yet another step to ...the rot by reducing the conscription age from 21 to 19.

...new regulation means that the army's latest recruits will be ...ildren. Under the new rules, students having completed ...h class examinations will be given 12th class certificates ...ing a year without sitting for examinations, while those in ...class will be given high school-leaving certificates.

...M SIGNALS

...SIDENT Reagan's ...duled trip to Bonn for ...summit in June is ...put further strains on ...diminishing interna-... popularity ratings. It ...also prove physically ...as well. Intelligence ...say that extremists are ...planning to disrupt ...address to the West ...federal Parliament, ...massive anti-nuclear ...arch planned for that ...certain to end in vio-...greater in intensity than ...battles that erupted ...US Secretary of State Alexander Haig's visit to West Berlin ...ptember.



Reagan (left) and Haig: diminishing popularity

...ETS OF TERROR

...ARREST last month of three Syrians in Stuttgart, West ...many, has confirmed European security agencies' theori-... Syrian hit teams are being dispatched to Europe to elimin-...ponents of the ruling regime, particularly the Moslem Brotherhood, a terrorist group violently opposed to the Assad Government. The three Syrians arrested, were in possession of weapons and explosives and western intelligence sources say that at least seven assassination squads have arrived in Europe in the past month with pre-selected targets to be liquidated.

A THREATENING UNION

THE THREAT of a military confrontation between North and South Korea has escalated alarmingly in recent weeks and seems a certainty according to latest intelligence reports. North Korean President Kim Il Sung's frenetic military build-up in the past few years gives him an overwhelming military advantage and it could convince him that the time is right to attempt a unification of Korea through military pressure.

TO MOSCOW WITH LOVE

IRAN's shift towards the Soviet Union in the wake of its ongoing war with Iraq has not only continued unabated but has gone beyond its previous limitations of supply of arms and ammunition. A number of trade missions from Teheran have visited communist bloc countries in recent weeks. One mission led by Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ali Jasebi was given a warm welcome in Czechoslovakia and East Germany when they arrived to sign trade agreements. Another mission visited Hungary shortly after and a third, led by Iran's Energy Minister, Hassan Ghafouri-Fard, visited Mascow for talks with top Soviet leaders and returned having signed a protocol on economic and technical cooperation.

According to intelligence reports, all three missions were trying to barter oil for medicines and commodities which Iran is desperately short of. According to sources in Teheran, the warming of relations between Iran and the Soviets is at the express orders of President Ali Khamenei who, it is claimed, was a former member of the Tudeh (communist) party.

NARROW ESCAPE

LIBYA's controversial leader, Colonel Gaddafi, seems to have a charmed life. According to Arab intelligence sources, recent reports that the Libyan strongman was the target of yet another assassination attempt late last month, have been confirmed. The incident occurred at a Libyan naval base in Tobruk where Gaddafi had gone to attend the celebrations of the anniversary marking the end of British occupation.

According to the sources, the aborted attempt was not the handiwork of a lone gunman but a group of disgruntled naval officers stationed at the Tobruk base. The idea was to gun down the Libyan leader while he was alighting from the naval vessel he arrived in. However, a group of loyal officers got wind of the plot and Gaddafi was whisked away from the base under heavy guard. The latest attack on the mercurial leader is said to be the seventh such attempt since Gaddafi came to power. The main grouse of the mutineers seems to be anger against Gaddafi for not giving the armed forces the status they think it deserves.

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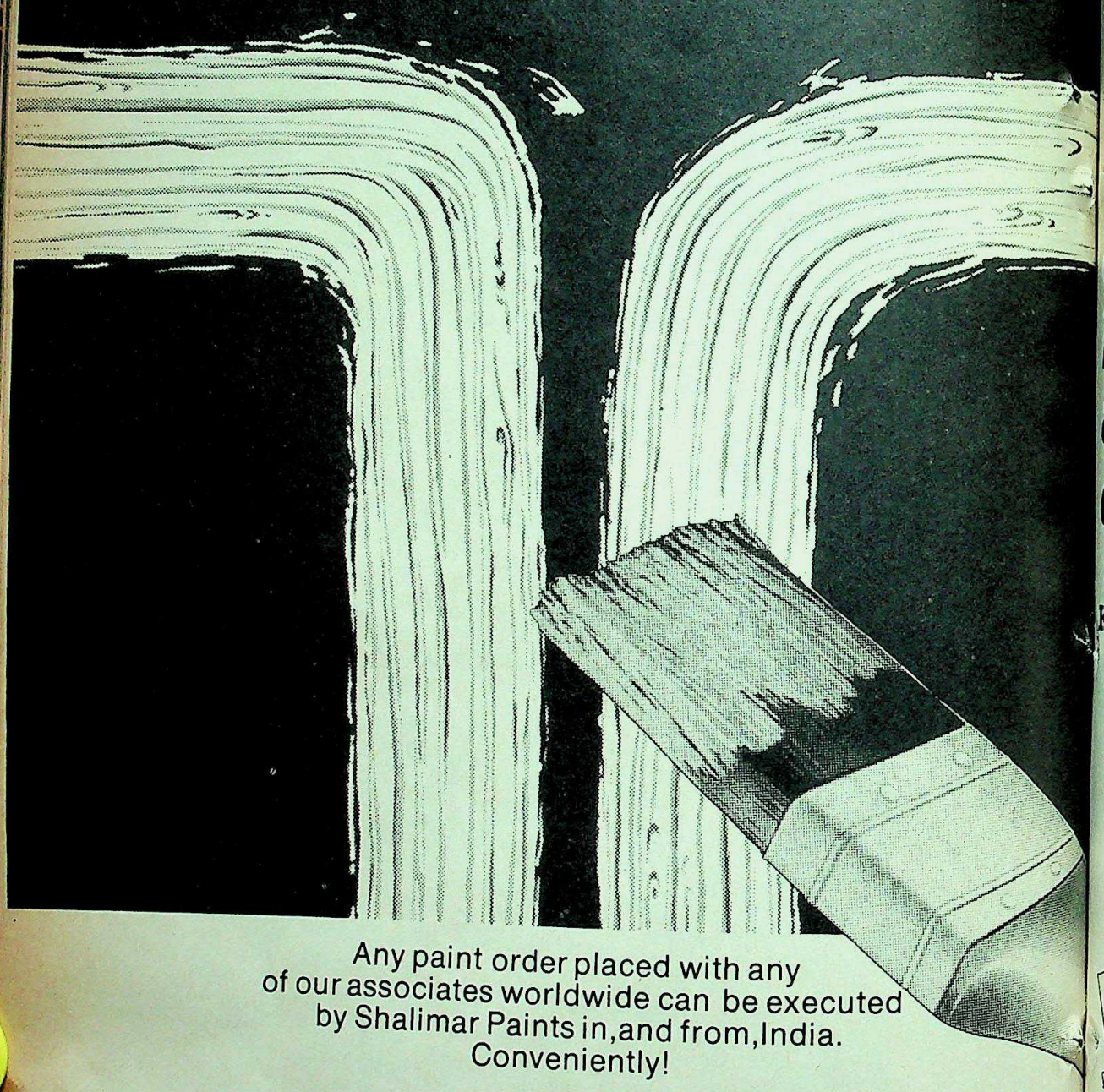

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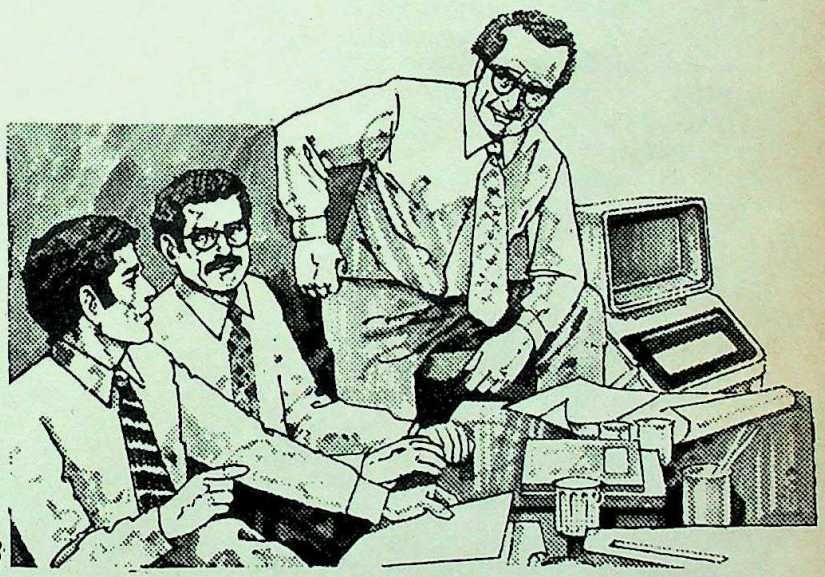

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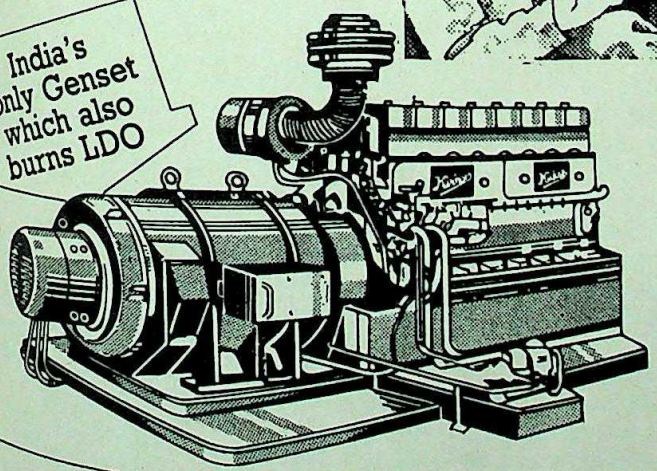

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Dissecting The Desert Fox

MUAMMER MUHAMMED Bo-Maniyar Gaddafi, the intrepid desert dictator, remains an enigmatic Islamic cult figure to all but a fistful of chosen confidantes who surround him. The 39-year-old former Bedouin who took over as Libya's strongman 13 years ago and within a short period turned his country into a mini-power by African standards will soon chair the upcoming Organisation of African Unity (OAU) conference. Even as he prepares for this sobering Third World confabulation Gaddafi has been unable to shake off the "crazy man" image that has hounded him throughout his career.

The crazy man label has been pinned on Gaddafi not only by American politicians and the Pentagon's musclemen but also by many of his own countrymen. There have been reams of newspaper copy and decks of headlines on Gaddafi's oil politics and Middle Eastern adventures. His support of quixotic rebel causes has led Americans to describe him as the best-looking terrorist in the world. Very little, however, has been written about Gaddafi the man and what makes him tick.

For several years Israeli intelligence, reputed to be the smartest and most perceptive in the world, has been compiling a painstaking character and personality study of Gaddafi. This confidential intelligence dossier on Gaddafi—reviewed by INDIA TODAY—is a new, comprehensive and strikingly vivid portrait of the desert's man for all seasons who is currently riding high on Alexander Haig's international enemies hit list.

Crusader: Gaddafi's central personality trait is his own unrestricted, undoubting belief in himself, "his power and his mission to the people of Libya, to the Arabs and to the human species as a whole". He is amply endowed, the intelligence brief concedes, with "talent, courage, activism and spiritual powers exceeding those of the people around him".

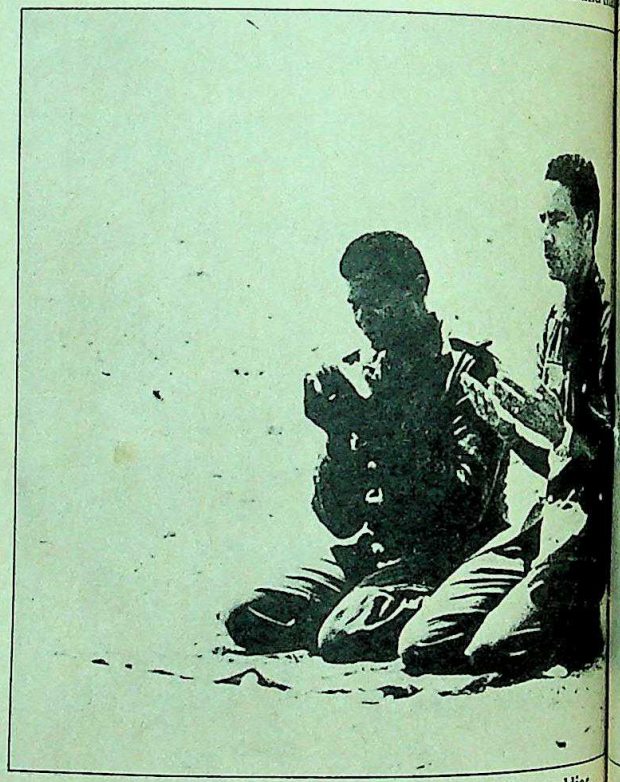
Those who know him have described Gaddafi as "a combination of contraries". He resorts to sudden unexplained periods of silence, introspection and self-imposed isolation by disappearing from public sight for lengthy stretches and retreating into the desert where he broods by himself in a tent. Gaddafi's behaviour, the intelligence dossier says, is "characterised by waves of excessive activity lasting for weeks and months followed by periods of depression during which he hides away and disappears from public sight. To this must be added his sensitivity and inclination to be hurt and to respond with anger following material disputes with colleagues and friends".

But there is no gainsaying Gaddafi's charisma "that draws all around him". Pedantic by nature, Gaddafi exults in meeting with people "in the role of teacher, instructor and preacher". Simplicity in garb, attire, and living habits have been the public hallmarks of Gaddafi. He prefers wearing an open-necked shirt, his sleeves rolled up, except on special occasions when he likes to don an Arab robe. His house is small and simply furnished. He often drives by himself, without any escort, in Tripoli as well as other parts of the country.

Arab leaders, if not threatened by Gaddafi's politics, are often stunned by his unconventional behaviour. He scorns accepted diplomatic niceties and shows his loathing for protocol by personally phoning Arab leaders at odd hours in order to set up direct contacts with them. In other instances "Gaddafi has turned up in another Arab country without any prior warning and without his hosts being aware of his arrival."

Direct Methods: During the early days of his rule Gaddafi would wander incognito through marketplaces in the tradition of the Abbassid Caliphs in order to sample public opinion. His control of the Libyan media is total. If he finds a programme that is being aired to be personally disagreeable he telephones the broadcasting station directly to halt the broadcast. And he often "goes over the proof pages of newspapers himself in order to approve them before they are printed".

Abstemious to the point of being puritanical, Gaddafi [illegible] all the obligatory prayers, drinks no hard liquor, and follows a [illegible] tribal custom of not eating fish. But there are indications, according to intelligence reports, that Gaddafi's long and virtually unchallenged reign may have begun to spoil him. Several sources report that he has built himself a house where he was born and [illegible]



Gaddafi praying in the desert with a Libyan soldier

he has accepted as a gift from the township of El-Marj a farm [illegible] which another house is at his disposal. Gaddafi's custom has been to scorn ceremony—he has shunned ranks and titles and remains with the rank of colonel that he received after the revolution. [illegible] too, may be changing. Since the mid-seventies a new literature extolling Gaddafi's "greatness" has begun to flourish in Libya. He is increasingly described as "the commander, the leader," and "the greatest intellectual of the country"—all signs of an emerging personality cult.

Gaddafi's roller-coaster personality, his extreme moods, spontaneity bordering on the impulsive followed by periods of inaction when he is left sunk in apathy and depression—have spurred armchair diagnosticians all over the world into making analyses. Those who support the crazy man syndrome report that Gaddafi suffers from a serious mental illness, from schizophrenia, paranoia, hysteria and other psychoneurotic disturbances.

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BUT THE information on Gaddafi's mental illnesses, the intelligence brief says, is equally insufficient to confirm or deny definitely whether he has such an illness. The brief, ...s in tone, reflects nonetheless: "There is much information ... his strangeness, lack of stability and the emotional ...ances from which Gaddafi suffers and it is too varied and ...e to be denied out of hand. Gaddafi does suffer from a ...ter disturbance and not from a dynamic mental illness of the ...ssype... Moreover he has been functioning as the leader ...ya for 13 years and it is difficult to believe that a man suffering ...maniacal depressive or other psychoses would be capable of ...nding the pressures that he has been under for such a long ...d with such stability without our being witness to the ...ks of the illness."

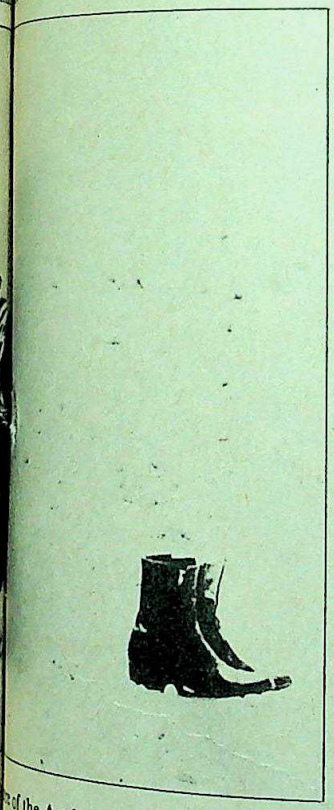
...t presenting Gaddafi as mentally ill, the intelligence ...nt says, is of no help to an understanding of him. Instead, ...fi can more easily be understood in the context of his being a ... of the tribal society that flourished on the periphery of the ... of the Arab world when the wave of Nasserite nationalism ... In what is a forthright salute to a man the Israelis consider ...gerous, uncompromising but worthy opponent, Israeli ...ce states: "As a man of talent and strength with unlimited ...n himself and his mission he is graced with courage, ...ness and charisma which helped him already in his ...ood to become the focal point of the society around him. He ... right man at the right time to put through a revolution and ... tribal society in Libya around him in a national framework."

Tribal Heritage: Gaddafi, an only child, was born in 1942 in ...ouin encampment on the coast of the Gulf of Sidra about 30 ...tres from the town of Siurt. His father was then in his late ... He takes his name from his tribe—the Gadhadhafa—which ... its name from a local saint, Sidi Mussa Kadhaf Al-Dam ... of blood).

The boy Gaddafi first confronted education at age 9 when his ... hired an itinerant to teach him to read and learn the Koran by rote. He was about 12 years old when he first enrolled in primary school. But Gaddafi's studies were constantly interrupted by the need for his presence in the desert to help with the family sheep-tending. He was about 15-year-old when he completed Grade 6. He had already become political. He had read Nasser's *Philosophy of Revolution* as well as the works of Michelle Aflaq (founder of the Baath Party), Sun Yat-Sen, Attaturk and Abraham Lincoln.

Other students poked fun at Gaddafi and his Bedouin ways but this merely made Gaddafi all the more determined to defend and propagate the uniqueness of his tribal culture. In secondary school Gaddafi was already recognised as a dissident student leader surrounded by a group of ideologically dedicated loyalists. While in Grade 11 he was publicly censured and expelled from school as a political trouble-maker.

Gaddafi enrolled in another school and kept enlarging his circle of political loyalists. By the age of 21—when he completed secondary school—Gaddafi and his henchmen were totally committed to overthrowing the royal regime which they viewed as imperialistic and anti-nationalist. He had already planned a coup on the Nasserite model. With this long-term goal always clearly in mind Gaddafi enrolled in the army officers school where he gathered a bunch of course-mates to form the Free United Officers Movement.



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Ideology: At the age of 27 Gaddafi became the undisputed leader of Libya. His philosophy "The Third Universal Ideology" as expressed in Gaddafi's *Green Book* is a combination of Nasserite nationalism, Islamic fundamentalism in which Gaddafi was nurtured during his youth, as well as the militant heritage of the Sanwassi order that tried to bridge various Islamic sects by applying the lowest common denominator of Islam.

He presents his theories as an ideological alternative to both capitalism and communism. Communist regimes, he claims, are anti-democratic because one class rules over all others and all possessions are held by the state. Parliamentary democracy, he avers, is also anti-democratic because it is a rule not by but instead of the people. He posits therefore, a form of government closer to the anarchist-syndicalist model in which directly elected committees which in turn elect other committees govern.

Gaddafi's philosophy is both totalistic and simplistic. According to one report: "He was able to identify with Nasserism because he did not grasp the secularity of its national-socialism. Nasser, who understood the strength of Islamic religious belief among the Arab masses, used religious slogans as part of his propaganda and was careful to stress the contradictions between Islamic belief and his socialism."

The report concludes: "The Third Theory is a militant, arrogant and all-embracing philosophy for all spheres of life. Gaddafi refers to it as though to a remedy that is supposed to solve the problems of humanity in all spheres. His theory is noteworthy for its egocentricity and an absence of understanding and minimum patience for the needs, positions, and beliefs of other people. His inability to appreciate and identify with the point of view of other people is a serious deficiency, of particular harm to his talents as a statesman and strategist in foreign affairs, since he finds it so hard to understand his opponents' position."

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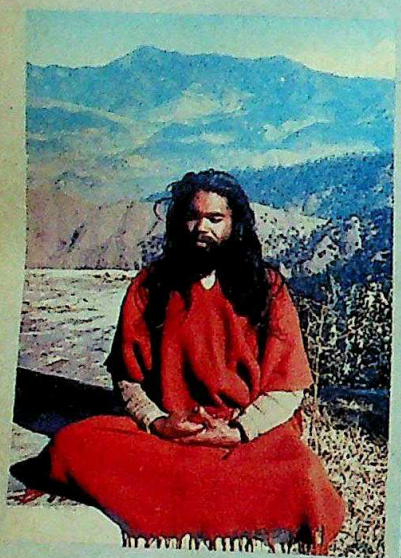

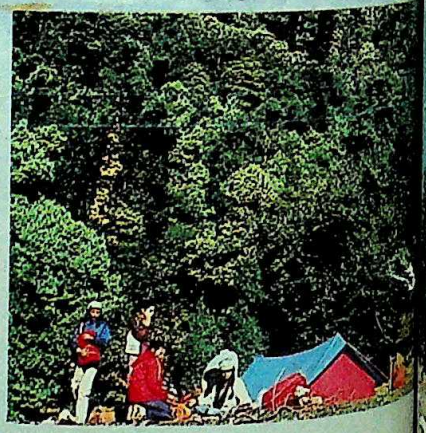

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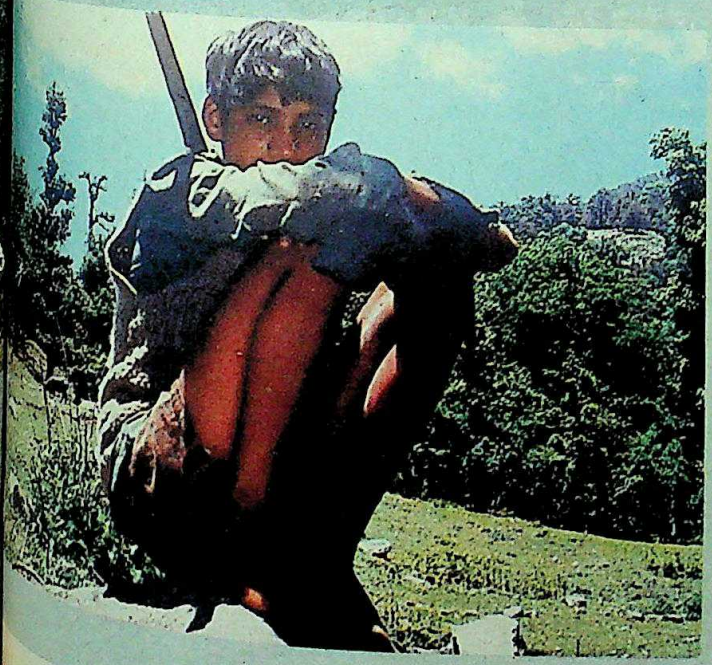

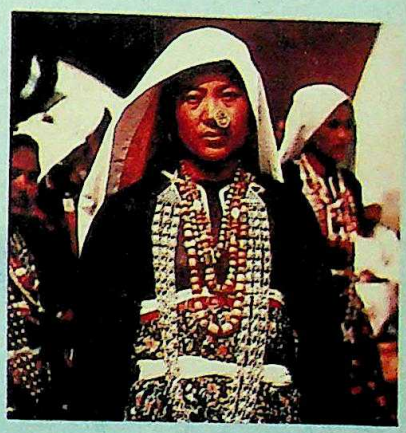

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SAUDI ARABIA

The Gulf Narrows

EXACTLY a year after her foray to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in May 1981, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi entered the citadel of Arab conservatism and oil power, the kingdom of Saudi Arabia last month in her second determined bid to link India's vast resource base to the oil-rich Arabs' incredibly huge development portfolio. She took with her her competent Cabinet colleague, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee, two junior Muslim ministers evidently for public relations reasons, four departmental secretaries concerned with external economic policy, commerce, petroleum, and chemicals and fertilisers, and her cerebral economic adviser, Mahfooz Ahmed. And, of course, Rajiv Gandhi, MP. Her UAE visit was the first ever by an Indian prime minister to this cluster of oil-rich principalities. Her Saudi journey was the first by an Indian premier since 1956 when Jawaharlal Nehru visited the country which was then a sprawling desert kingdom but is now a major world economic power.

This Aladdin-lamp country of 2.1 million sq km and 9.25 million people has a gross national product (GNP) of $100 billion. It has 15.5 billion tonnes of petroleum in reserve, and its daily output of crude comes to 9.92 million barrels. In 1980, Saudi Arabia's exports were valued at $102.5 billion, and imports at $33 billion. The Saudi market is worth $100 billion a year—$60 billion in products, $40 billion in services. India's economic relation with Saudi Arabia is miniscule. In the last five years, India has received $132 million (Rs 119 crore) in direct loans from the Saudi Fund for Arab Economic Development, out of over $2 billion disbursed. Six large Indian public and private sector companies are currently building half-a-dozen projects in Saudi Arabia, which add up to less than 1 per cent of the projects under construction.

In 1980–81, India's imports from Saudi Arabia were worth Rs 434 crore and exports Rs 171 crore; exports in the current financial year are expected to rise to Rs 260 crore. India has an ad hoc oil import agreement with Saudi Arabia, under which it has already imported 1.1 million tonnes out of a ceiling of 2.5 million. The number of Indians working in Saudi Arabia is somewhere between 100,000 and 130,000. India has done somewhat better in Kuwait and the UAE, having received $472 million in loans from the Arab Development Fund including $147 million from Kuwait.

Strategic Scenario: Mrs Gandhi visited Saudi Arabia at a time when the strategic scenario in the entire Middle East-Persian Gulf (MEPG) region is once again becoming critical. Ominous cleavages exist at multiple inter-meshing levels: between the two superpowers, between and among the local countries and groups of countries, within groups and within individual nations. Even a belligerent Israel no longer unifies the Arabs. The war between Iraq and Iran, which is likely to end in the former's humiliation if not defeat, has blurred the frontiers—never very strong—between the confrontationist and conciliationist groups of Arab countries.

The Camp David agreement is dead although it may take a little while to give it an unlamented burial. Even if Israel withdraws from the rest of Sinai, its annexation of the Golan Heights and its confrontation with the Arab population on the West Bank make it impossible for Egypt's new leader Hosni Mubarak to carry forward the policy of a separate peace between Israel and Egypt.

Israeli strikes at Lebanon to eliminate the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) bases, could touch off war with Syria which maintains seven brigades of 35,000 men in Lebanon as an Arab deterrent force. But Syria, though heavily armed by the So... cannot make war with Israel without the full commitme... Jordan and Iraq. There is no such commitment from ei... dissipating its resources in the war with Iran, while Syria ... divided by internal tensions. In the Persian Gulf, the six-... Gulf Cooperation Council, which is getting increasingly conc... with the region's security, has endorsed the Fahd peace plan ... Middle East. But the plan has not been endorsed by the ... summit, and Syria and Libya have mounted a full campaign a... it. The Gulf countries have been ineffectual in ending the ... between Iraq and Iran, neither of whom happens to be the co... member. The six nations have lent their support to Iraq, but ... not broken relations with Iran which cows them down w... perceived ability to fan pro-Khomeini revolutions throughou... Persian Gulf region including Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

Superpower Pressures: To this highly complex web of ... conflicts and cleavages in the MEPG region, the superpowers ... high voltage pressures by their own rivalry. The United Sta... ready with naval bases, carriers, and the Rapid Deployment F... (RDF) to intervene in any situation of war or internal confli... regime collapse that may threaten American oil interests. ... Indian brigadier who recently spent a year at an American ... college observes perceptively that the two world powers are lo... in a volatile rivalry in the MEPG region because "they do ... comprehend each other's intentions" and therefore "operate f... the worst possible scenarios".

While the American military-political presence in the reg... highly visible, it is not so with regard to the Soviets. Howeve... are reports of a surprise improvement in Moscow's relatio... Iran, which seems to be confirmed by the recent Irania... Pakistani) agreement to talk with representatives of the M... regime in Kabul. Marxist-ruled Yemen, and Ethiopia have j... Libya to form a pro-Soviet group within the larger confronta... group of Arab nations, and recently there were reports that th... Yemens were going to merge after all to keep their distance ... Saudi Arabia.

High Priority Region: The strategic scenario in the ... region, then, is not only highly convoluted but also quite bl... far as India is concerned. Yet Mrs Gandhi's two visits to the ... in one year suggest that she is anxious to make at least the ... Gulf area a high priority for India's foreign policy. As an int... and an aim, this is certainly most relevant for India's develop... and modernization efforts during and beyond this decade. ... intentions alone do not foreign policy make. The prime mi... forays into the UAE and Saudi Arabia raise a cluster of poli... questions with regard to the formulation of a durable and ... Indian foreign policy strategy for the entire MEPG ... Particularly because India's overall performance in the reg... the end of an eight-year-old effort, is still dismally poor.

Poor both economically and politically. Only about 1 per ... of the total exports of the region are bagged by India, and 1 per ... of construction projects. Yet the MEPG region makes 30 per ce... India's imports and takes 20 per cent of its exports. With each ... Gulf countries India runs a minus trade balance. The 70 ... companies that operate in the MEPG region can execute only ... medium size projects, while most of these regimes ... fascination—and money—for grand projects. Indian co... have abandoned, for one reason or another, 50 per cent of co... signed for joint ventures. India's trade performance in the

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...been much poorer than in South-East Asia and even

...reason is that in the MEPG region there is no Indian ...ent. Moreover, the market here demands the best and the ...dern items. The Arabs are very strict about schedules and ...time. They yield to personal contacts rather than cor- ...ence. India's knowledge about the region as a whole and ...dividual countries is woefully scanty. There is hardly any ...e as a documentation centre. The Institute of Foreign ...which was designed to provide a data-base, was about to be ...was in 1981. Indeed, India is the only major country in the ...about an institute on world economy, for which the ever ...P.N. Haksar has been crying out for several years. In ...ems.

...is simply not seen by the Arabs as an industrial power. ...put to Mrs Gandhi at her two press conferences in Saudi ...wed clearly that most Arabs still see India as a country ...mass poverty, hostile to Pakistan, pro-Soviet, and unable ...to give satisfaction to its Muslim minority. There is ...a huge communication gap, a total failure to project ...images of India. And still this is not a job that can be ...public relations ...or sleek word- ...plomats.

...has cultural ...s with only ...e Persian Gulf ...Indian press ...of the region ...e pathologi- ...ical or conflic- ...ng vast gaps in ...knowledge of ...cs of social ...here are 2,500 ...dents (none ...di Arabia) in ...t nothing, re- ...ing is done to ...a correct In- ...mation, and only very small numbers can be admitted ...al and engineering colleges. A proposal to open an ...ed higher technical institute in the MEPG region has ...ing in the air for some time.

Mrs Gandhi and Rajiv in Riyadh: winning new friends

...tegic Link: For many years now India has done nothing ...d have captured the imagination of the Arabs, especially ...ger generation that has begun entering the corridors of ...The communique issued after Mrs Gandhi's extensive talks ...Saudi leaders stressed the strategic unity of the Persian ...the subcontinent; peace and amity in one, it said, would ...peace and amity in the other, while conflict and war in ...nerate conflict or war in the other. The same sentiment ...ds into the communique that was issued last year at the ...e prime minister's visit to UAE. Mrs Gandhi realised ...r Saudi visit how important it is for India to improve ...with Pakistan in order to stabilise its relations with ...princely ruling elite of 6,000 men who have become ...ed to see India largely through Pakistani eyes. A no-war ...friendship treaty with Pakistan will certainly improve ...ange in the entire MEPG region.

...e is no certainty, however, that a pact or a treaty is going ...concluded between India and Pakistan in the near future. ...other hand, the tensions and cleavages in the MEPG region ...vide at more than one point—in Iran, in the Gulf, in ...between Israel and Syria. Mrs Gandhi is yet to formulate a foreign policy strategy that can apply to the entire MEPG region or to large parts thereof, and is not lamely confined to unstable individual regimes which unfortunately preside over most of the countries there, including Saudi Arabia. She seems to have determined to deal with each regime bilaterally, which is an extension of her domestic ad hocism to the realm of foreign policy which she has brought under her personal oversight, if not direction.

Long-term Planning: Yet the time has come for patient long-term planning with an ability, like China's, to work in a long time-frame. It is essential to study the future of OPEC as a cartel of oil and money power; the changing character of India's oil dependencies as its own oil output goes up; trends and processes of change in individual countries and in the region as a whole; and, above all, the crucial question whether a praxis of cooperation in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf can be built only on supply-demand of oil and surplus capital assets of the oil-rich nations or whether political forces are vitally important.

A foreign policy based on expediency will have a short breath. The MEPG region is going through processes of change with which India is inadequately familiar. Which political and social forces are likely to respond to India's cherished values of democracy, secularism and social justice? Are these forces upstream in the region? In a period of imminent convulsions, can India afford not to take sides? In her talks in Saudi Arabia, Mrs Gandhi appeared to highlight India's differences with the Soviet Union. Was this just location shooting or does it indicate a coming change in her relations with the two global powers? Is India's Soviet connection essential for peace and stability in the subcontinent and therefore in MEPG or has it become an impediment?

The oil-rich countries of the Third World have piled up huge financial assets—$185 billion in 1978. Only 17 per cent of these assets is deployed in the developing countries, and that too mostly Arab and Islamic nations. Larger portions of this asset can be made to come to other developing countries including India in the form of aid, commercial loans and investment funds. So far the Indian share has been a pittance.

Pranab Mukherjee's session with 50 Saudi businessmen and financiers made this abundantly clear. While the finance minister laboured to explain how liberal India had become by permitting full repatriation of profits, dividends and technologies as well as 40 per cent equity, the Saudis remained sceptical, distant and politely uncommitted. They are used to better terms, not only in the West but also in a host of developing nations.

Perhaps the best strategy for India is to work for long-term economic linkages to be erected on long-term political harmonies. That would mean working hard for a future that may not prove to be elusive for long, judging by certain trends already visible in the MEPG region. If Arabs respect India, it is because of India's firm policy of opposing imperialism and firmer adherence to democracy and secularism. Values and processes whose time is probably a-coming even in the currently despot-dominated regions of the Middle East and Persian Gulf.

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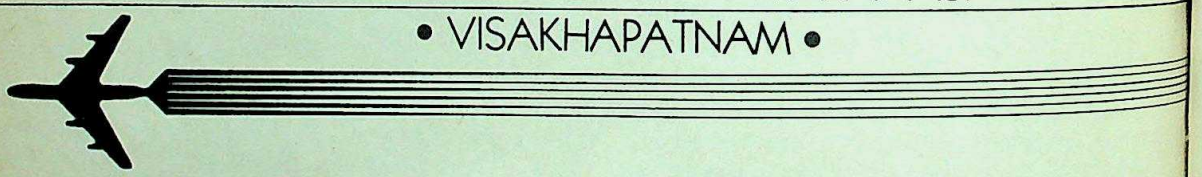

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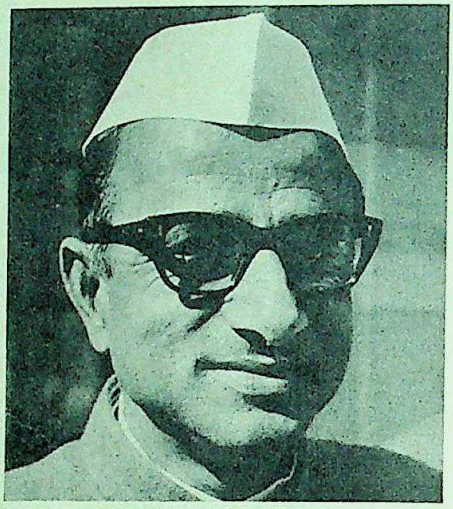
DELHI

Operation Land-grab

IT IS a lucrative business. Grab a piece of land anywhere in Delhi, sell it at exorbitant rates to land-hungry people, and become a millionaire almost overnight. This is exactly what leading politicians, property dealers and anti-social elements have been doing in the capital for the last few years. Last fortnight members of Parliament raised the issue of illegal encroachment and construction on government land and the resulting row exposed the unholy nexus between politicians and bureaucrats in land-grab operations in the city. According to official estimates, over 1,000 acres of public land worth over Rs 70 crore has been encroached upon in the last two years alone.

Unscrupulous elements with powerful political and bureaucratic support have not spared even the land meant for parks, schools, playgrounds, dispensaries, hospitals and roads. Admits Union Works and Housing Minister Bhishma Narain Singh: "It has become a very serious problem. Encroachment on government land and unauthorised construction have increased tremendously and we must stop this at any cost." The agencywise break-up of government land under encroachment is: Delhi Development Authority (DDA): 6,248 acres; Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD): 92 acres; Defence Ministry: 95.68 acres; Nazul land under the deputy commissioner: 163.2 acres and Railways: 94 acres.



Singh: a losing battle?

Instances: Singh denied any knowledge of specific instances of large-scale encroachment on public land, but INDIA TODAY'S investigations have revealed the following cases:

► a 70-shop commercial complex has come up on the footpath opposite the Tis Hazari district courts. The construction took less than a week while police and MCD officials twiddled their thumbs, reportedly under pressure from a former Congress leader in the corporation. Each shop sold for over Rs 20,000, netting the ticians over Rs 14 lakh;

► the son of a local Congress(I) M allotted a cooking gas agency for the Yamuna area, and built his showroom store in the only district park in Vivek on over 1,000 sq m of land giv DDA for just a store. Over 20 trees down and a road constructed;

► a 10-acre mango-tree gar Azadpur in old Delhi, owned by Administration and given on lease persons from Bihar, was sold at Rs sq m. Between December 1980 and mber 1981, over 100 houses were here, and the stalwarts of the DDA's ture department, who were looking garden, quickly vanished. Even thos encroachers lost the subsequent cour the DDA could not secure possession land. The property dealers made ove crore and a new colony named Mah Enclave Extension has come up, from the Government has not earned a paisa;

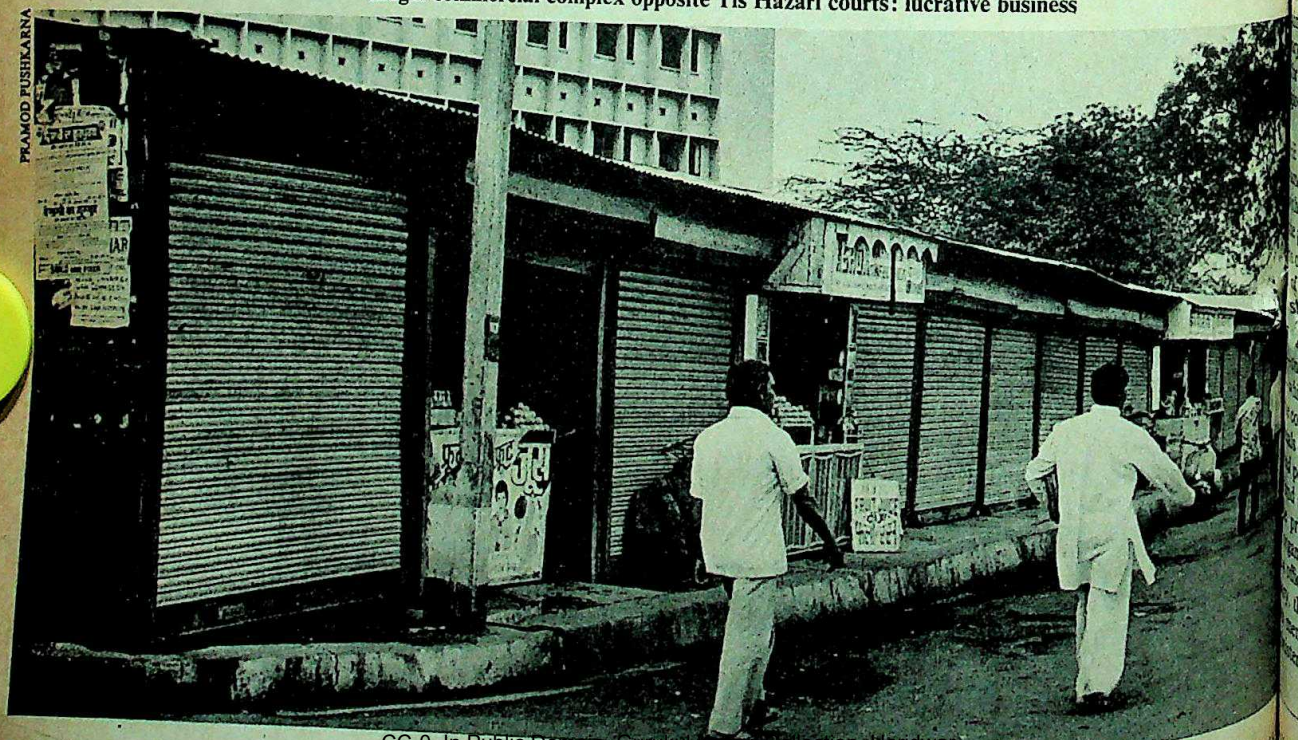
► in Narela, an outer Delhi village which gave access to a secondary scho been used for residential and comm purposes by local political leaders. S children have now to walk nearly a kilo to their school;

► some ruling party leaders, in ance with MCD officials, have co shops in the playground of a higher ary school—total income over Rs 1

► a Youth Congress (I) leader is r

Illegal commercial complex opposite Tis Hazari courts: lucrative business

PRAMOD PUSHKARNA



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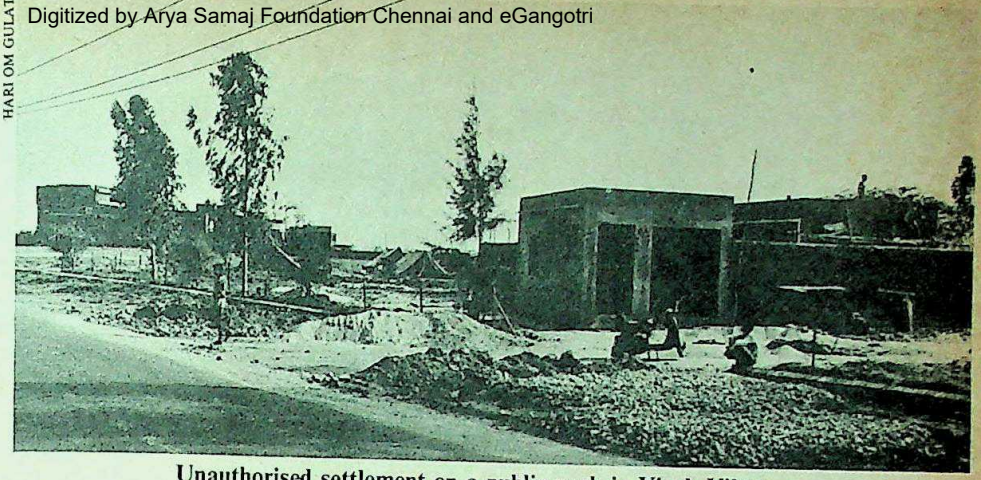
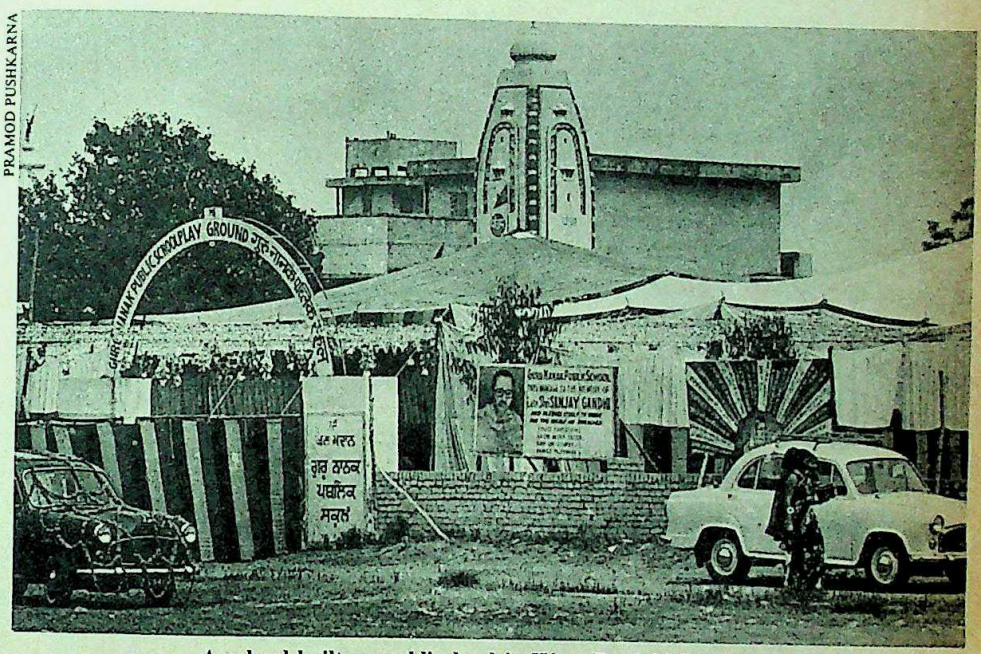


Unauthorised settlement on a public park in Vivek Vihar

PRAMOD PUSHKARNA



A school built on public land in West Punjabi Bagh

PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

A mini shanty town in Jehangirpuri: land for the taking

on a 2,000 sq m DDA plot in East
ar, a trans-Yamuna colony. The
vacant until September 1981. The
board and wire-fencing were re-
one night. The plot's market value
Rs 10 lakh;

West Punjabi Bagh, a west Delhi
two-acre plot meant for a park was
by Congress (I) supporters. After
ary wall was constructed, two big
of Mrs Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi
up at the gate;

s of politicians has raised over
ds along a 2-km stretch of railway
Wazirpur Industrial Area. Each
sold for Rs 500 to labourers who
ated to Delhi for Asian Games
ction jobs;

500-jhuggi complex on over 20
Jagat Nagar has netted racketeers
Rs 25 lakh.

ration land-grab' is closely linked
prices, which have shot up by over
nt in the last two years. With each
government—Jan Sangh, Janata
ress (I)—reluctant to demolish
ed structures, Delhi is fast be-
ibum. Speaking in the Lok Sabha,
n Mohanty, deputy minister for
housing, said: "Each case has its
y. In some, big personalities are
I am sure that there are certain
ements which stand in our way.
t only individually powerful but
the support of certain political

most popular methods of grabbing
nd are: constructing jhuggis and
structures, building small tea-
workshops and other commercial
ments, extension of lease for the
cultivation of land already ac-
public utilities, and encroachment
purposes.

MODUS operandi is almost the
e in each case. A political leader
powerful connections—depend-
party in power—hires people for
m a piece of land. With the active
the local police, he raises tem-
tures. Obliging DDA and MCD
sue him with demolition
ly after the structures are com-
which he uses to obtain stay orders
courts. Once the court intervenes,
bend over backwards to provide
power connections, and the value
hoots up.

process doesn't stop there. The
anises a demonstration in front of
ices, ministers' residences and, if
the prime minister's house, and
memorandums seeking protection.
ter obliges him by postponing the

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to another date—which never

an official of the Works and Ministry: "It is a vicious circle. An which is illegal right from the be- suddenly becomes legal. If you de- illegal construction after a few ons are hauled up both by the the political authority."

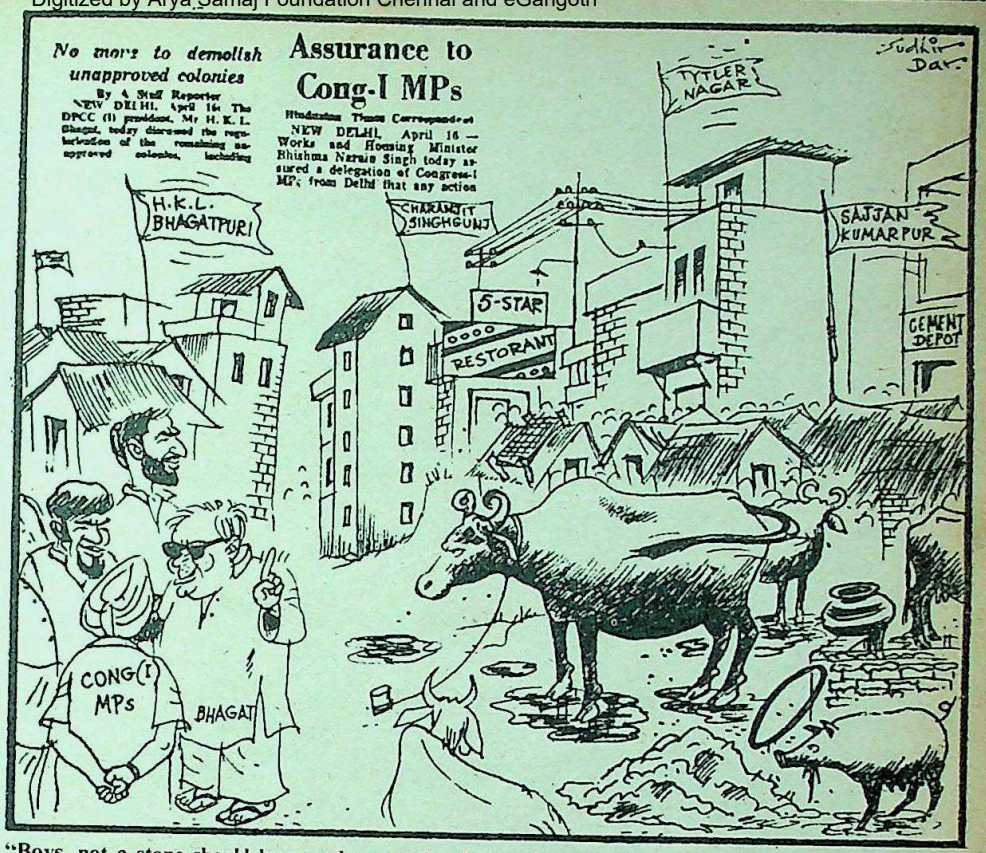
Janata Party MP Ratan Singh who initiated the discussion on the calling attention motion: "I am large-scale unauthorised construc- encroachment on public land can- unless there is a nexus between the rities and the land grabbers."

Progress: This nexus has stalled inst the encroachments. Former Governor Jagmohan had set up a headed by a deputy commissioner and had also appointed a high-level p under the chief secretary to mo- progress made in clearing ments. The committee meets nearly month but has got back less than 3 of the government land. After S. L. placed Jagmohan a fresh survey the job was made difficult when all ngress (I) MPs allegedly en- unauthorised construction were guests at DDA functions presided ion ministers and Khurana.

ample, Sajjan Kumar, Cong- from outer Delhi, who was char- building two unauthorised Budh Vihar and Krishan Vi- the DDA's Rohini housing has been the chief guest at over a functions. Budh Vihar and Vihar were given civil amenities like ing, a dispensary, a school, a milk a police station within two mo- truction, and the land was sold at Rs 150 per sq m.

e officials have apparently been not to interfere. The DDA wrote a the Delhi Police in December 1981, to help for the demolition of Enclave Extension. The police ary 19 for the demolition but the later withdrawn on the plea the e not spared because of the with the same day. Mahendaru Extension remains undemolished under instructions from the min- ter, only 583 unauthorised struc- been razed so far, and 1,500 ete.

Business: The politician-civil in the property deals started in 's when Choudhary Brahm last and last chief minister of Delhi, construction firm. Prakash and his developed colonies after seeking from the local agencies, but the



"Boys, not a stone should be moved, not a thatch must be touched . . . remember, every vote counts!"

roaring business they did drew other politicians and the Government into this business. Baffled by the rising land prices and the profits, the Central Government banned private construction companies from developing and selling land. The DDA was constituted and entrusted with the job of selling surplus land.

Soon after the DDA's entry, politicians started the unauthorised sale of agricultural land. According to MCD sources, by the end of 1967 every second municipal councillor was a property dealer and between 1960 and 1982 over 600 unauthorised colonies came up. Despite protests from the public none was demolished because the city fathers passed resolution after resolution in both the corporation and the metropolitian council against the proposed demolitions.

Instead, they pleaded with the Central Government for the regularisation of the unauthorised structures on humanitarian grounds. Between 1962 and 1982, over 30 such resolutions were unanimously adopted by the civic bodies. Admits Housing Minister Singh: "We have to look at the entire problem from the residents' point of view. They can't be punished for someone else's sins. We are plugging legal loopholes to prevent further encroachment."

Legal Lacunae: However, the Central Government has not moved quickly enough on the legal front, again presumably under pressure from within. Even existing laws are not being fully utilised. The Delhi Lands (Restrictions on Transfer) Act, 1972, provides for punishment if land business is transacted without prior approval of the proper authority. But between 1980 and 1982 only 272 cases were registered under this act although the actual number of such transactions exceeded 1,50,000, in which occupation of public land was given on power of attorney. And despite pressure from the DDA and the MCD, the Central Government has not made encroachment on public land a cognisable offence. Complains a DDA official: "We have a strange situation where the Government has to establish its ownership of land which belongs to it and the illegal occupant can sit back and smile."

In 1972 the Central Government was moved to insert certain amendments in the Delhi Municipal Act, 1957, the Delhi Development Authority Act, 1957 and the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1972. The amendments suggested included: declaring illegal the unauthorised sale and possession of government land and making it a cognisable offence under the Indian Penal Code, setting up tribunals for land cases and excluding civil courts from such matters. But no action has been taken on these requests even after 10 years. Singh asserts that the bill to amend the acts will be placed in the current Parliament session, if it is cleared by the Law Ministry. By that time, unfortunately, the land grabbers will have made an additional hundred crore rupees.

—PRABHU CHAWLA

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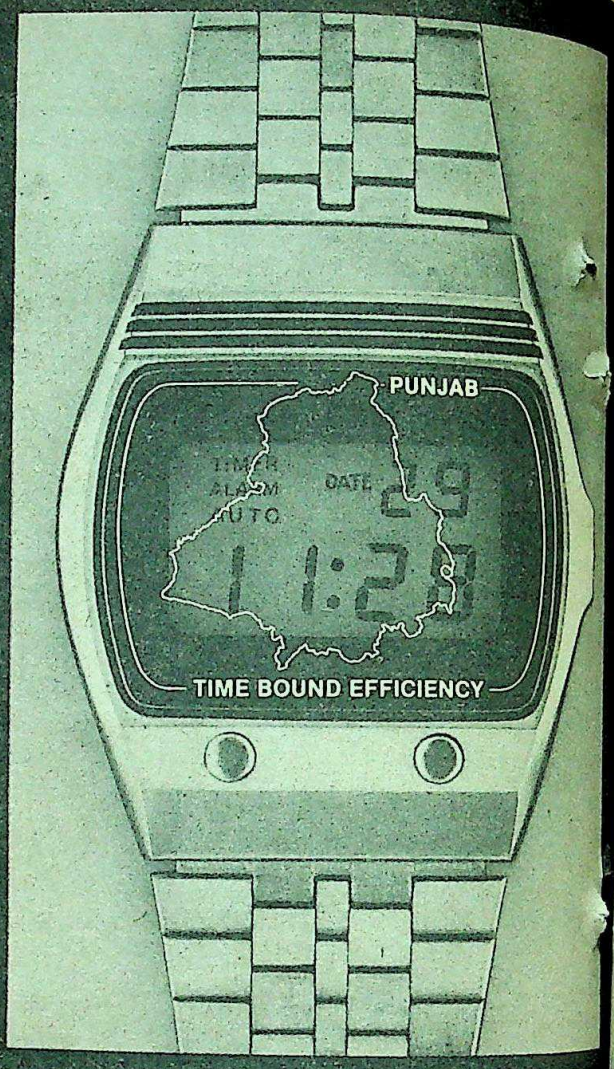

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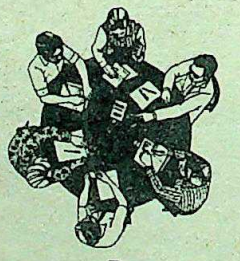

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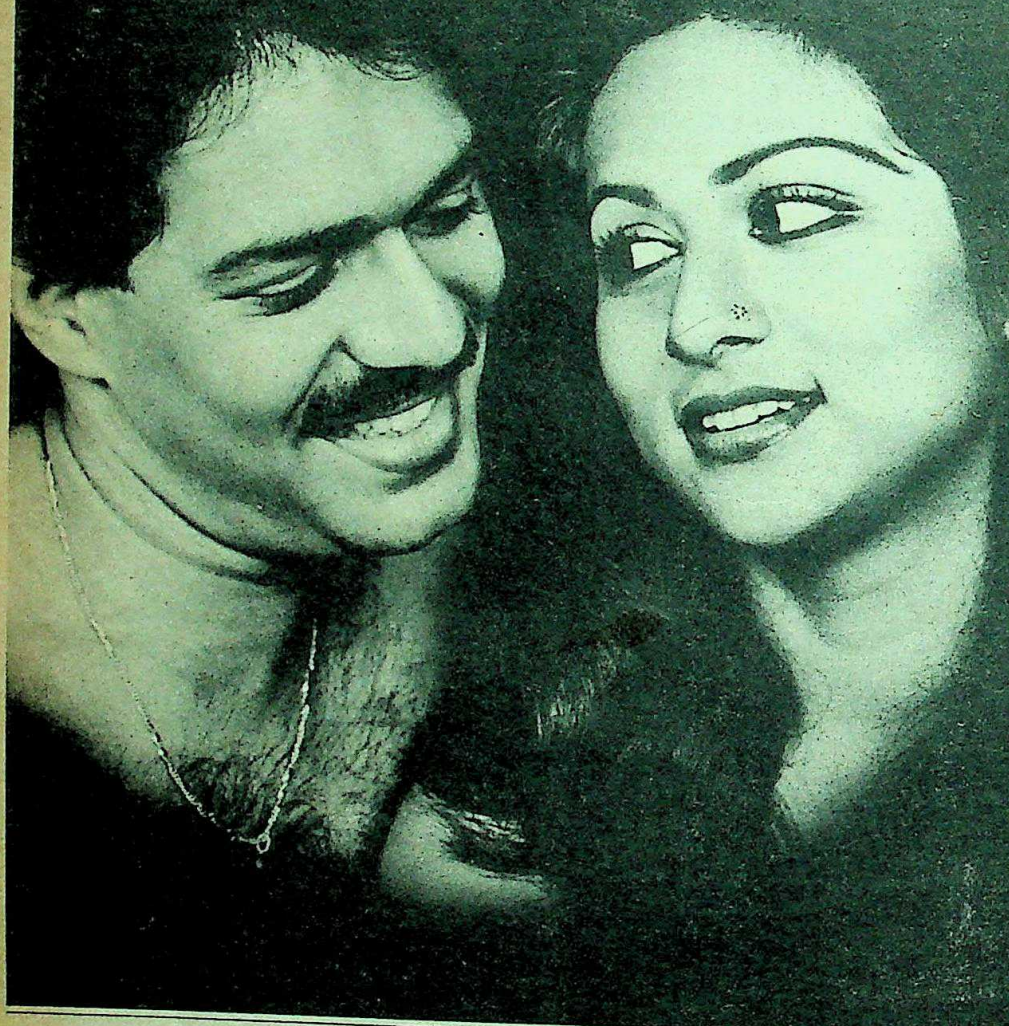

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COURT

r-room Brawl

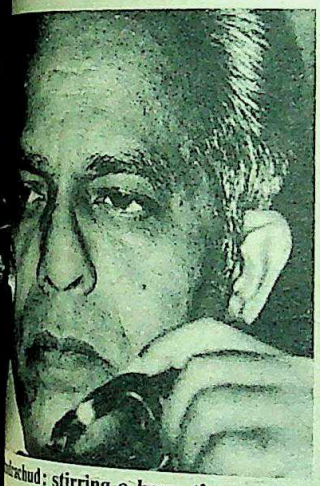
HEN Chief Justice of India, Y.V. Chandrachud sent the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) proposals designed to speed up the of the court he probably thought ld be welcomed. But his far-posals, though they might in-ased the burden on the court, ran ost criticism and provoked threats and near-riotous scenes at an SCBA

drachud's plan was to do away e-consuming oral arguments in tegories of special leave petitions. ese cases would go to two judges, ld sit together twice a week and notes and opinion in chambers. "computers would be used to dispose of petitions". He added: "Computers would perform better than some judges."

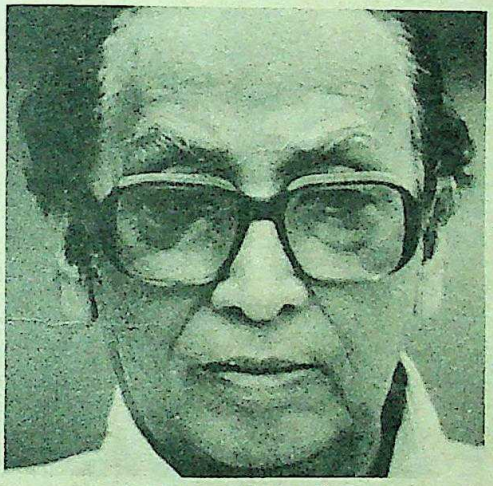
The remarks made at the meeting predictably drew fire from the Bench. Chandrachud pointed out that no decision had been taken and emphasised that he had only sought the Bar's opinion on the changes. All talk of a strike was forgotten as some lawyers felt that they had been misled by politicians to bring about a rift between the Bar and the Bench. Several lawyers pointed out that the letter, circulated by SCBA Secretary B. Dutta, stated that a decision had already been taken. Others put the blame on Sen, adding that he had attended few SCBA meetings that year.

number of cases affected varied from 40 to 70 per cent. Criminal cases, if they are included, would be hit heavily, as nearly all are based on concurrent findings of fact. Says Anthony: "This would mean that the Supreme Court would be putting its stamp on even the death penalty without hearing the case." However, INDIA TODAY has learnt that criminal cases may not be heard in chambers.

There was also the stark fact that advocates would be hard hit by the proposals. Lawyers are paid for each hearing, frequently arguments are brief, and senior counsels handle quite a large number in a day. The top men, such as Sen, Soli Sorabjee, K.K. Venugopal, F.S. Nariman and L.M. Singhvi handle at least 10 special leave petitions on every admission day, and sometimes even 20. Their reward is rich: the going rate for a senior counsel is around Rs 3,000 for a single appearance, sometimes rising to Rs 5,000.



drachud: stirring a hornet's nest



Sen: opposed to reforms

Jethmalani: provocative stance

he two disagreed would the matter n open court. Chandrachud pro-ally that nine classes of appeals be n this fashion.

ion Fodder: As the suggestions ng an acrimonious campaign for ers, they were instantly converted ion fodder. Each presidential can-played himself as the defender of of the Bar. Asoke Sen, Congress(I) SCBA president, standing for a ern, was driven to firebrand ora-m Jethmalani, Bharatiya Janata and another presidential candi-marked provocatively: "It is e to get justice in chamber sittings kind of judges we have today." He d that the proposal was "uncon-and arbitrary"; he later said that rks had been misunderstood. Markhoty, another presidential can-ed that if the trend was not checked, Lawyers also claimed that Sen had done his best to stifle debates on subjects inconvenient to the Congress(I). Retorts Sen: "In matters of the Bar, I am above politics."

With 23,298 cases pending before the Supreme Court as of March 1, and with only about 100 regular matters heard every month, the changes proposed by Chandrachud may sound reasonable. But they are anathema to Indian lawyers raised on the maxim that justice must be heard and seen to be done. Said Frank Anthony, former MP and practising lawyer: "This would emasculate Article 136 (under which the Supreme Court hears special leave petitions). As it is they slaughter 90 per cent of our appeals. This way they will slaughter 99 per cent."

Varying Estimates: Other lawyers feared that the petitions might be rejected out of hand behind closed doors. Said one: "How can we know what goes on in the confines of the judges' chambers?" Guesses about the

The lawyers have their own proposals. Says R.K. Garg: "If the Government is so concerned about arrears, why doesn't it appoint more judges?" There are now four vacancies in the court. Justice Krishna Iyer retired in November 1980 and Justice Alak Chandra Gupta retired in December 1981 but these vacancies have not been filled.

The controversy continues. On the heels of the furore, Union Law Minister Jagannath Kaushal told the Rajya Sabha that the Government might try to reduce the workload on the courts by setting up administrative tribunals and curtailing the right of appeal in some cases. He said that the proposals would ultimately help ensure that the Supreme Court and the high courts dealt only with constitutional matters. He also deplored the reaction of the Supreme Court bar to the proposals. It seems that last fortnight's hullabaloo is just the end of the beginning.

—PARAN BALAKRISHNAN

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...ANCE RACES ON

...e BIGGEST strides in 1980-81 were taken by the wonder-...of the stock market, Reliance Textile Industries. Its asset ...rose handsomely from the 23rd position to the 13th, and its ...on the sales ladder moved up from the 12th rung to the ...Reliance's profit showing was even more impressive, ranking ...among all companies.

...company's net assets increased from Rs 110 crore in 1979 ...crore in 1980, its net sales from Rs 156 crore to Rs 208 ...and its net profits from Rs 8.23 crore to Rs 11.23 crore.

...G FOR BAJAJ

...'s Piaggio (makers of Vespa scooters) are making a ...back to India through a move aimed at hitting Bajaj Auto ...home market. Earlier Piaggio had a tie-up with Bajaj for ...scooters in Pune. More recently, the two companies have ...slugging it out in international markets, and Piaggio has ...Bajaj to the law courts in a number of countries on the ...that Bajaj scooters are a copy of Piaggio's product, and ...violate patent laws.

...ggio is now negotiating with the Andhra Pradesh Industrial ...ment Corporation for producing a new modern range of ...ers at the AP scooters plant near Hyderabad. But, for the ...able future at least, Bajaj's firm hold on the domestic market ...shakeable.

...OMEBACK TRAIL

...AY make a big comeback to India, now that a computer ...from the Indian railways has reported that the IBM ...computer systems operating in Britain and Canada are the ...lable. Earlier, there had been a furore in Parliament over ...d Bank's insistence that the Indian railways opt for an IBM ...mpatible system. And the Department of Electronics had ...sted that it could design a software system on its own, ...g the need for importing software systems as well. But the ...team has stated in its report that the IBM system with ...d software can be set up in four years, against the 10 years ...thinks will be needed for developing indigenous software. ...servers of the corporate scene feel that, even if IBM gets the ...the company is unlikely to resume full-fledged operations in ...More likely, IBM will choose to operate through an in-...ary company.

...HE HOOK

...ON Carbide seems set to follow the lead of other large ...es in pulling out of the shrimp trawler business. The ...y is cutting its fisheries staff after suffering heavy losses on ...operations over the last three years. Other companies ...already pulled out include EID Parry, Indian Tobacco ...y, Britannia Industries, Delhi Cloth Mills and TOMCO ...Mills). Yet another outfit in the business, New India ...is also reportedly trying to sell its fishing fleet. A declining ...ishing prices and rising costs have contributed to this almost ...breakdown of what was seen a decade ago as a boom area.

...MUCH TOOTHPASTE?

...GATE-Palmolive (India) Ltd (CPIL) is an aggrieved ...ompany these days. While the Government is regularising ...apacity for a wide range of industrial units, it has decided to ...e CPIL for producing vastly in excess of its licensed capacity, and thereby violating the Industries (Development and Regulations) Act. The company's case is that it has not broken the law, but only increased its capacity through using better technology—without adding to equipment and machinery. Colgate's toothpaste capacity has gone up from 6,982 tonnes to 11,000 tonnes, and tooth powder capacity from 2,025 to 4,500 tonnes. If the company's claim about better technology is to be believed, these figures indicate a gigantic leap in toothpaste manufacturing technology.

TISCO TAKES OVER

TATA Iron & Steel Co (TISCO) has upstaged its sister outfit, Tata Engineering & Locomotive Co (TELCO) in the 1980-81 corporate rat race. TELCO had scraped past long standing leader TISCO in asset rankings the previous year, but the positions stand reversed again, according to the Commerce Research Bureau. TISCO's assets at the end of its 1980-81 accounting year totalled Rs 468 crore, against Telco's Rs 460 crore.

THE INDUSTRIAL TOP TEN RANKED BY ASSETS

	Rank 80–81	Rank 79–80	Assets Rs Crore 80–81
TISCO	1	2	468
TELCO	2	1	460
ACC	3	4	241
Scindia Steam	4	3	226
Gwalior Rayon	5	5	203
CESC	6	10	202
Hindustan Lever	7	6	198
DCM	8	8	184
ITC	9	12	182
J.K. Synthetics	10	11	172

But TELCO remains No.1 in terms of both sales and net profits. On the sales ladder, it is followed in descending order by TISCO, Hindustan Lever, DCM and Voltas. In the profit rankings, its closest competitors are TISCO, Hindustan Lever, Century Spinning and Ashok Leyland.

The Commerce Research Bureau's tabulations show that profitability rates are low among the top 500 companies. Net profit averaged only 4.32 per cent of net assets, a scaling-down on the previous year's average of 4.93 per cent. Of the top 100 companies, only six earned a return of 10 per cent or more on net assests.

CUTTHROAT COMPETITION

THOUGH the liberalised import policy, announced in early April, promises to make a number of items available at cheaper rates to domestic consumers, it has caused problems to some domestic manufacturers. Polyester fibre prices, for instance, have started coming down from around Rs 87 to Rs 84 per kg, now that Japanese producers are offering the fibre at Rs 82 per kg. Similarly, imported viscose fibre is available at Rs 19.54 per kg, against the domestic producers' price of Rs 21.74 per kg. Textile mills also look forward to cheaper, modern textile machinery becoming available through imports, while domestic textile machinery manufacturers face a demand recession caused by the prolonged strike in Bombay's textile mills.

Steel too can now be imported under open general licence (OGL), while the public sector Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) is saddled with accumulated stocks of 1.08 million tonnes, valued at Rs 500 crores. The global steel recession has ensured that steel can now be imported fairly cheaply. SAIL estimates that the interest burden on its stocks will reduce its profits by about Rs 50 crores.

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TECHNOLOGY

Who's Minding The Store?

FOR a country that claims to have the third-largest complement of scientists and engineers in the world, India's technological impact is not much to write home about. Admittedly, India is the largest industrial power in the Third World—but industry is one thing, technology another. Japan is both an industrial as well as technological power and Japanese industrial products are characterised as much by the high quality of their technology as by anything else.

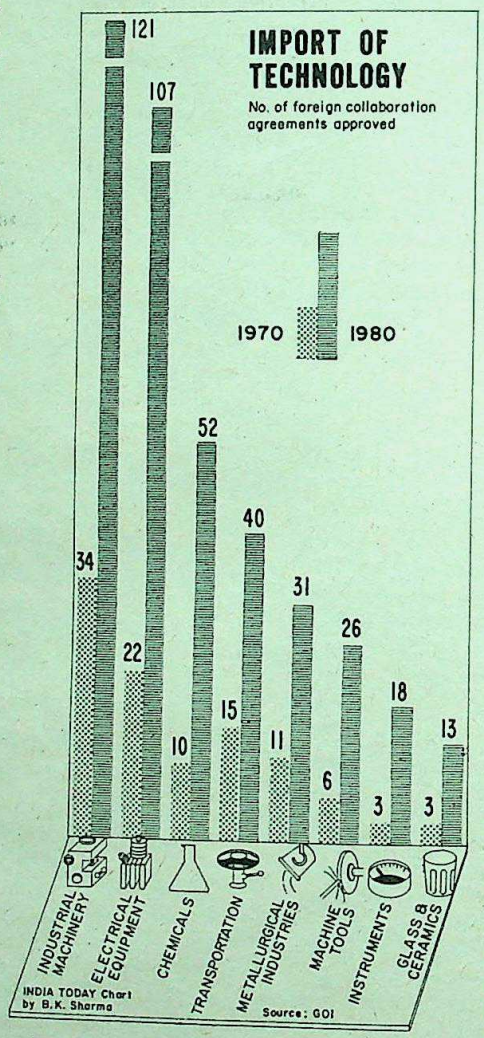
On the other hand, Indian industrial products are bought abroad because they are cheap, not because they are good, which is not quite the same thing. In less than 30 years after World War II, Japan had been able to evolve a distinctive Japanese technology and equally distinctive industrial products. There is no such thing yet as Indian technology, and none in sight either.

The Europeans and Americans are asking themselves why Japan has been able to invade their markets successfully in one industry after another. Some of the widely recognised weaknesses of American and European industry are declining productivity, poor labour-management relations, inadequate plant investment and marginal product-quality standards. But these are not the main reasons.

Key Factors: There are many who believe that the downgrading of key technical posts—engineering and manufacturing—in favour of what are known as staff functions in management language has seriously affected the capacity of US and European industry to compete in world markets. "The key line jobs —engineering, manufacturing and marketing—require the best talent available in a competitive world. "These are the people who must know what goes on 'out there' in the plant, who must be product entrepreneurs and set quality standards," says Arch Patton, retired director of the well-known US firm of management experts, McKinsey & Co, and adviser to US presidents on executive, legislative and judicial salaries.

Patton believes that 'staff' positions have far outstripped 'line' jobs in number. He quotes the chairman of one of Japan's most successful electronics manufacturers: "The US puts its best young minds to work in staff jobs, and has for years. Bright people have got the message. They avoid line jobs. Japan, on the other hand, wants its brightest men in line jobs. After all, that is what manufacturing is all about. Our people understand that while we may rotate them from line to staff, and vice versa, line jobs are critical for what you in America call fast-track executives," (*Businessweek*, April 5).

The top 10 per cent of engineers with master's degrees received $30,000-a-year salaries in the US in 1981. The top 10 per cent



who graduated from business schools received close to $50,000. The median master's degree holder in engineering was paid $24,000 last year; the median MBA about $35,000. In other words, the dewy-eyed median MBA with a couple of years' experience is offered a starting salary equal to the median engineer with 15 years of solid experience. This gap between the MBA, typically headed for a staff job, and the engineer, destined for a critical line job, has been widening persistently for years.

Misplaced Emphasis: What is position in India? We do not have the statistics the Americans are a[ble] upon at the flick of a switch, but there is enough evidence that non-technical tives (most, but not all, in staff jobs) do better than technical people a[t] top jobs earlier in their career.

INDIA TODAY selected 20 compa[nies] random and examined the remunera[tion] their top executives (those earning Rs [1] and over per year). Ten companies ha[d] ranging from Rs 100 crore to Rs 60[0] a year and included the top two com[pa]nies in the private sector, viz Tata Engine[ering] and Tata Steel. The other half were me[dium] sized units with sales in the range of [Rs] 100 crore a year.

Out of the sample of 20 companies, 5 companies (Modipon, Indian Explo[sives], Greaves Cotton, Indian Oxygen and Synthetics) had more top executives [with] technical qualifications than those wi[th] Two (Tata Engineering and Lars[en] Toubro) had an equal number of each. The rest (13) were dominated by non-tech[nical] people at the top level, and included such basically engineering compan[ies] Mahindra & Mahindra, Escorts, M[RF] and Peico Electronics. (Technical qu[alifi]tions cover engineering degrees and d[iplo]as well as membership of technical so[cie]and institutes without basic degree qualification, but do not cover science [and] and diplomas).

For the 20 companies as a whole non-technical people outnumber technical counterparts in top positions roughly 3 to 2, the ratio varying fr[om] much as 10 to 1 in the case of Dunlop [and] in the case of Indian Explosives. In the of Tata Engineering (1981 sales: Rs crore) India's premier engineering [co]ratio is 1 to 1; but then, surprisingly, only 4 executives in top positions remuneration of Rs 1 lakh and abo[ve] much smaller companies like Gla[xo] crore) and Indian Oxygen (Rs 78 cro[re] 19 each.

IT is possible that the ratio of tec[h] to non-technical people is differ[ent] middle management levels, but this not really help. Unlike the Japanese move executives from one func[tion] another as a training exercise, industry has a history of fun[ctional] promotions. The engineer or accoun[tant] usually promoted within his specialis[t]

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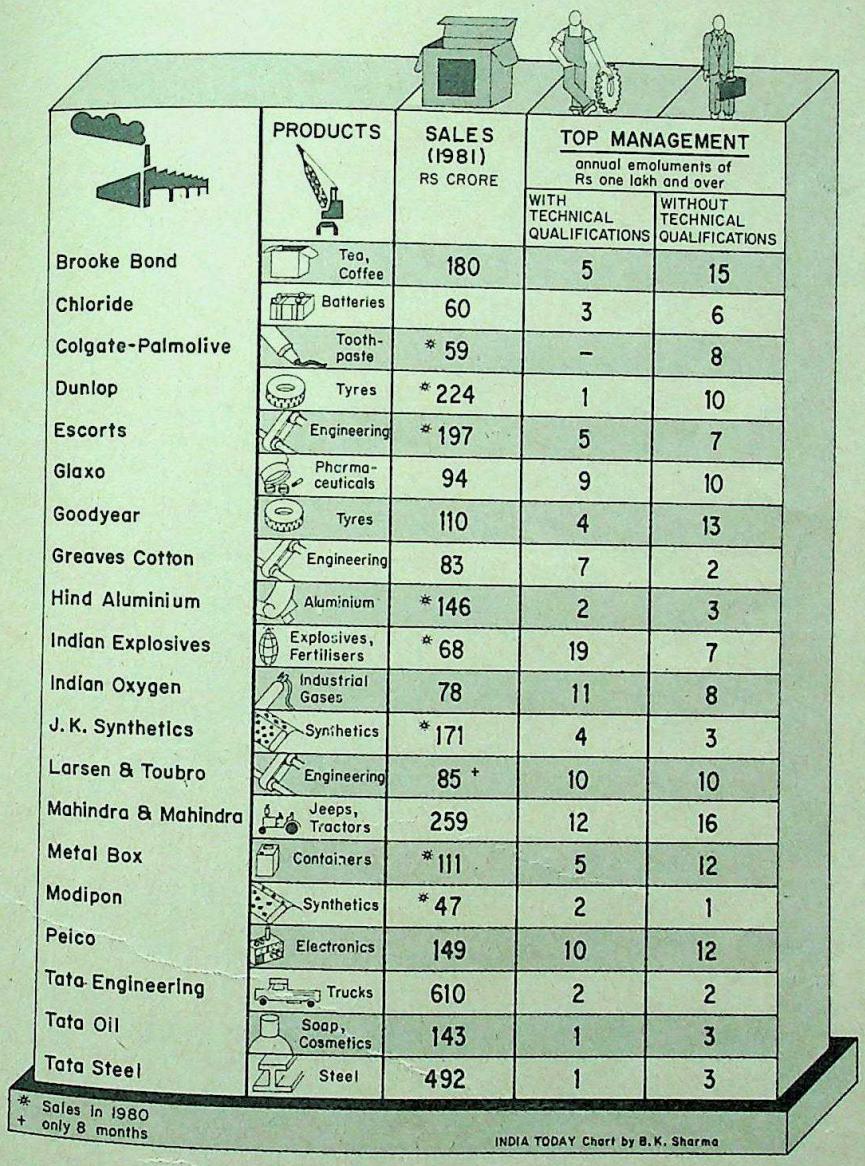
...ains the upper reaches of the ... tree. So non-technical ... show evidence of climbing to the ... faster but also more frequently ... among technical executives ... Promotion, says Patton, is not ... incentive: it is highly visible. ...: There are several reasons ... people do not reach the top as ... non-technical ones. The main ... of course, the ... of govern- ... and regu- ... the massive ... the Govern- ... corporate acti- ... technical peo- ... disadvantage, ... individuals in ... the regulatory ... the govern- ... are nearly ... non-technical ... with the ... with ... Generalists ... comfortable ... lists. ... the '50s and ... companies ... large number ... technical staff to ... government ... various levels. ... off as 'liai- ... Delhi, help- ... in Udyog ... buttonholing ... and their con- ... and general... ... their way ... vast govern- ... paratus. These ... worked closely ... management— ... relations ... handled at the ... and acquired ... clout at ... They soon ... indispensable— ... impossi- ... operations in ... some official *dhobi* mark or ... and became top management ...

... jobs, on the other hand, are ... little noticed unless something ... In any case—who wants to ... better product when customers ... lousy products just the same? ... that can put up with the kind of ... passenger cars that have been pro- ... decades without any customer ... can put up with anything. The result is not only the downgrading of the technical function, but of technology itself. It is also cheaper to acquire technology from abroad than to develop it.

Contrasting Approaches: More than 30 years after the first passenger car or truck rolled off the assembly line, Indian companies are still signing 'collaboration' agreements with foreign motor car firms like Toyota and Suzuki for producing cars and trucks. Technology is considered in India as just another commodity—like cotton and groundnut oil—which can casually be picked off the shelf, not something that has to be consciously nurtured and developed. A company with the maximum number of collaboration deals is considered the most successful.

There is nothing wrong in acquiring technology provided it is absorbed into one's corporate system and improved upon with continuous research and development effort. The Japanese, like the Americans, are still net importers of technology, but not of the same technology over and over again. They import technology and export industrial products based on that technology. The robot is not a Japanese invention; it is actually of US origin. The Japanese will soon be setting up robot-making plants in the US—carrying coals to Newcastle, as it were—but that is how technology transactions take place.



	PRODUCTS	SALES (1981) RS CRORE	TOP MANAGEMENT annual emoluments of Rs one lakh and over	
			WITH TECHNICAL QUALIFICATIONS	WITHOUT TECHNICAL QUALIFICATIONS
Brooke Bond	Tea, Coffee	180	5	15
Chloride	Batteries	60	3	6
Colgate-Palmolive	Tooth-paste	* 59	–	8
Dunlop	Tyres	* 224	1	10
Escorts	Engineering	* 197	5	7
Glaxo	Pharma-ceuticals	94	9	10
Goodyear	Tyres	110	4	13
Greaves Cotton	Engineering	83	7	2
Hind Aluminium	Aluminium	* 146	2	3
Indian Explosives	Explosives, Fertilisers	* 68	19	7
Indian Oxygen	Industrial Gases	78	11	8
J. K. Synthetics	Synthetics	* 171	4	3
Larsen & Toubro	Engineering	85 +	10	10
Mahindra & Mahindra	Jeeps, Tractors	259	12	16
Metal Box	Containers	* 111	5	12
Modipon	Synthetics	* 47	2	1
Peico	Electronics	149	10	12
Tata Engineering	Trucks	610	2	2
Tata Oil	Soap, Cosmetics	143	1	3
Tata Steel	Steel	492	1	3

* Sales in 1980
\+ only 8 months

INDIA TODAY Chart by B.K. Sharma

Remedies: There are two ways to retrieve the situation in India. The economy needs opening up both internally and externally so that industry is exposed to reasonable competition from within as well as from outside. Secondly, the notion that the Indian customer is a second-grade creature who can be fobbed off with anything should be laid to rest. After 30 years of industrialisation, does India have any product that is on par with the best anywhere? It should not be difficult to select a product that comes very close to the best and concentrate all our energies in taking it to the top. It could be cotton textiles or synthetic fabrics or umbrellas or shoes or hard luggage or scooters. If the country can make one good product it can make several and, in the process, make a name for itself in the world market. At the moment, Indian industrial products do not figure in the world market except in a marginal way.

Moreover, India has acquired the same type of 'reputation' for industrial products that Japan did before the war, whatever our export promotion councils may say. It took a war for Japan to live down its 'reputation' and rise from the debris of defeat. It may also take a war for India to do so—another kind of war, fought with spanners and wrenches on the shop floors of factories that are now turning out second-grade stuff, for the simple reason that the sheltered market—as Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee told INDIA TODAY last month—can and does take anything.

—JAY DUBASHI

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IMF LOAN

Smooth Sailing So Far

ALL TOO many loans given by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to Third World governments in recent months have been called off mid-course: Zambia, Bangladesh, Zaire, Kenya. And economic adjustment programmes to implement IMF loan conditions have led to riots in Morocco and Sudan. But the biggest loan of them all, the $5.7 billion (Rs 5,000 crore) arrangement hammered out last year to help India tide over its foreign exchange crisis, is ticking away smoothly—so far.

The IMF executive board met in Washington on April 15 to express approval of India's economic performance under the programme, and authorised the drawal of the third and final instalment of Rs 300 crore out of the first year's loan commitment of Rs 900 crore. By then, the Finance Ministry in New Delhi was already preparing for a fresh round of negotiations on the targets for the second year of the three-year programme. Drawal of the second year's loan quota of Rs 1,800 crore will depend on India meeting these targets.

Strong Position: "I'm on a good wicket because I've met my first year's targets," says Finance Secretary R.N. Malhotra, referring to the credit and money supply ceilings imposed by the IMF. Malhotra, who was India's principal negotiator with the IMF last year, adds: "The IMF is happy so far, and I can now negotiate from a position of strength."

The Fund should certainly be happy. The Government said last year that it would keep inflation down to 11 per cent (March 1982 over March 1981), and has in fact contained it to 2 per cent. Industrial production has picked up by over 8 per cent, exports by 15 per cent, and despite all denials to the contrary, the Government has been faithfully dancing to the IMF's tune.

It promised to allow industry to "earn adequate returns", and has decontrolled steel and cement prices. Coal prices are due to go up next. It said it would "promote the desired growth in private savings", and the budget duly introduced a series of measures toward this end.

More Collaborations: The Government also told the IMF it would make foreign collaborations easier, and such collaborations have been on the increase. Most important, the new year's import policy has been drawn up on exactly the lines indicated to the IMF last year, with more than one newspaper terming it the most open import policy since Independence. Says an observer. "The Government's memorandum to the IMF last year would serve as a catalogue of virtually all the economic policy initiatives of the last six months."

Malhotra: "on a good wicket"

The entire economic package is an act of faith. Lower costs because of price stability (via the credit squeeze), the drive for higher productivity and the opening up of the economy to international competition are supposed to result in an efficient, athletic economy capable of launching on a global export thrust that will wipe out the trade deficit and end the foreign exchange crisis.

This chain of assumptions could snap at any of many points: A bad monsoon, a recession brought on by the credit squeeze, or the fact that this quite simply is the wrong time to open up the economy—other countries looking for markets in a recession-hit world find entry here, but through protectionism deny access to exports from India.

Lurking Pitfalls: There is, already, some evidence of the lurking dangers. Imports have increased despite falling oil prices and reduced imports of bulk items like fertiliser and steel—reflecting the liberalisation of import policy as a whole. So the trade deficit has if anything gone up from the previous year's Rs 5,500 crore. Foreign currency reserves have dipped by a third. At about Rs 3,400 crore, they are now at the lowest level in over four years, and would have been still lower without the Rs 600 crore taken from the IMF before March.

"This is not something we can be complacent about," says Malhotra, who confesses that the total deficit on foreign exchange transactions last year was over Rs 300 crore more than expected. A critic of the loan and its concomitant economic policies adds: "When the reserves are so low, everybody is being encouraged to spend foreign exchange. I see none of the austerity on this front that one should expect."

Confronted with the new ... policy's encouragement of such imp... decorative paper (as an "essential ... and billiard balls, Malhotra conceded ... I can't say there is an atmosphere ... terity. But I think it would be a mi... restrict imports. Some of the aberrati... refer to are only of marginal importa... have not opened up the econ... sumer goods in the manner that ma... countries have."

Tight Conditions: The big test ... loan programme, almost everybo... lies ahead, as the IMF's conditions ... drawing further loan instalments ... gressively tighter. Last year, the IMF ... money supply to grow by 15.7 per ce... year, it will have to be negotiated ... 14.5 per cent. With a credit squeeze ... biting, and the finance minister ... that things will not get easier, indi... clearly worried.

Now, the World Bank has added ... worry-beads: In its latest analysis ... Indian economy, the Bank expects th... on foreign exchange transactions to ... over the next two years, to Rs 4,70... and will force even greater foreign b... ings on commercial terms. The loan ... ment may be ticking away smoothly ... but could there also be a time-bomb ... away simultaneously? —I.N.

BLADES

Crossed Swords

LIKE a couple of seasoned and we... campaigners, the pugilists range... selves on either corner of the ... the left side, Malhotra International ... acturer of Topaz and a range of other ... a heavyweight of 32 years standing ... blade industry with 83 per cent ... domestic market and substantial ... under its belt. On the right, the new ... who dared challenge the champ... ghtweight called Wiltech which ... has heavyweight seconds : the ... group's Asian Cables, the Karnataka ... Industrial Investment and Develop... Corporation (KSIIDC) and multina... blade giant Wilkinson Sword of Brita... latest instalment of a battle which org... almost four years ago was a ... publicised slanging match betwe... blade-makers last fortnight.

Although the Malhotra-Wiltech ... has been an ongoing affair ever s... domestic giant first saw the dange...

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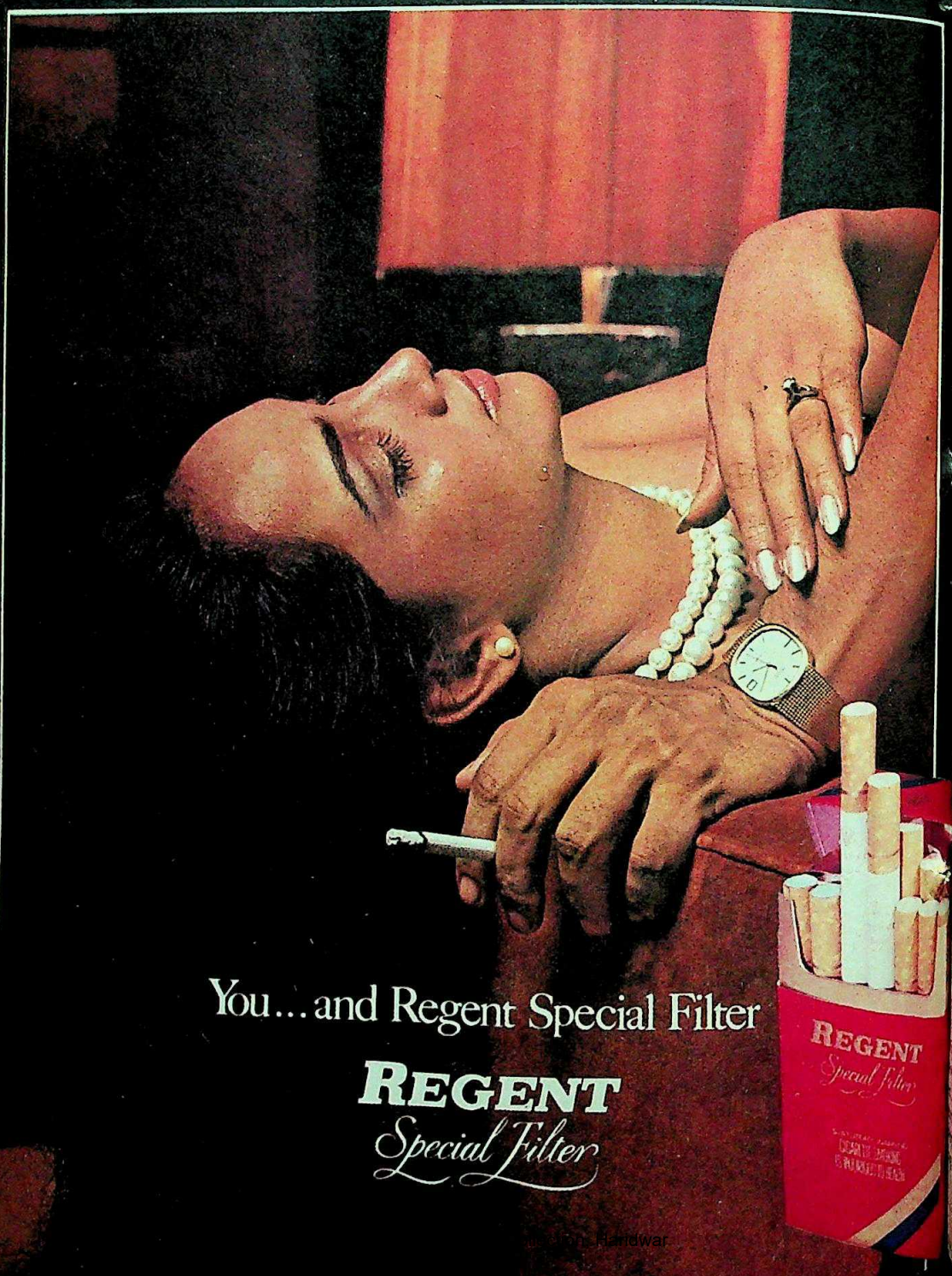
An Exclusive Affair



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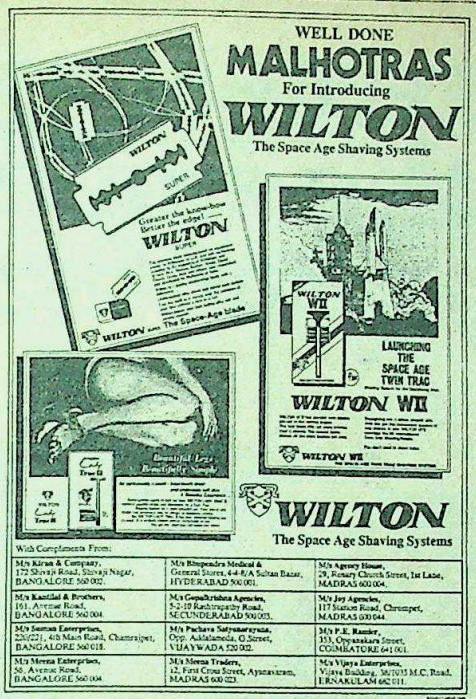
...competition, the past six months ...a relative lull in the battle. The ...for the renewed scuffle was the ...uration of Wiltech's Wilkinson-...plant in Mysore on April 13. ...the guest list at the high-key ...were Karnataka Chief Minister R. ..., who performed the inaugur-...Richard Powell, life-president ...Sword. Although the British ...'s stake in Wiltech extends only ...ly of machinery and know-how, ...ity participation, it was clear ...Wiltech's own publicity campaign ...s press statements that the new ...ades pitch hinged largely on the ...-up.

...rate Sniping: The Malhotra ...ed last month's corporate sniping ...this very fact. Threatened by the ...the internationally-recognised ...name, which would almost cer-...substantially into the market for ...riced ranges of Malhotra pro-...company came up with a novel ...obstruct the newly-formed

...0 days before the scheduled in-..., the blades giant suddenly in-...new range of sophisticated shav-...on the market. In an obvious ...queering Wiltech's pitch, the ...razor systems were named ...Wilton Lady Trac II, and used ...on model name "W II". If there ...maining doubts about their in-...troducing a new brand, they ...ed by Malhotra International's ...launching pad: Mysore and ...the cities which are Wiltech's ...ase.

...k's response, coming on April 13, ...st viciously hard-hitting advert-...inauguration day which infor-...country's English-speaking public ...ys of "bloody mornings", blunt ...ll edges and poor quality were ...no-holds-barred indictment in ...ad language was quite clearly ai-...lhotra International, the leading ..., though it accused every ma-...a lack of concern for quality ...se of outdated equipment, and ...chnology. "...the manufacturers ...ades were better at making claims ...g quality blades", read the full-...tisement. "Edges graduated from ...ain and platinum to diamond, ...ades remained what they have ...—dull".

...tisements Dropped: Once again, ...Wiltech was outsmarted. Only a ...before publication time on April ...eyes around the country started ...the company's full-page advertise-



Wilton's ad: no-holds-barred

ments. Starting with the *Times of India*, which sent wires to all its newspaper offices asking them not to carry the insertion, the advertisement was gradually dropped by most major national dailies. In Karnataka and the southern states, Wiltech's logical starting point, the advertisements went virtually unseen, since the entire chain of the *Indian Express*, *The Hindu*, and the *Deccan Herald* decided at the eleventh hour to drop it. Curiously, the *Express* had only a few days earlier persuaded Wiltech's advertising agency to extend its advertisement campaign to the Bombay and Ahmedabad editions.

As with practically every step taken by the Malhotras since the blade battle first began, their latest move lacked even a modicum of subtlety. Having succeeded in pressurising the southern newspapers to drop the Wiltech ads, Malhotra International promptly replaced these with huge publicity spreads of their own. The result was a virtual blackout on Wiltech's pre-launch publicity, replaced by an unprecedented splash by the threatened giant.

Malhotra's products: close shave

Last fortnight, however, top executives of the Malhotra organisation were denying that they had had anything to do with the newspaper boycott of Wiltech. Said S.N. Malhotra, the director of the group who handles finance and marketing operations: "There is no truth in this rumour. How can we stop any newspaper from carrying the ads of a competitor?" Nemchand Jain sales manager (advertising) of the *Times of India*, was equally emphatic in denying the Malhotra connection. "We did not give in to pressure from any blade manufacturer, or bend to anybody's will. The only reason we dropped the insertion was because the copy was knocking the competitors... it was obnoxious and in bad taste."

Overlooked: With the corporate scuffle degenerating into a free-for-all, the claims and counter-claims became increasingly vicious. Indian blades were, not entirely unjustifiably, categorised as technologically inferior and dull, and Wilkinson Sword projected as the consumer's saviour. But a fact which was largely overlooked in the recriminations was that Wilkinson Sword, the company supplying its technology and know-how to Wiltech, had only six years ago purchased an Indian-made blade-making plant from Malhotra International.

Certificates of inspection were issued by Wilkinson Works Director D.J. Kemp for two punch presses, a passivating machine, a strip-handling furnace, a coil joining machine, a high-speed printer and strip grinders and stroppers. Although Wilkinson President Powell told the Indian press last month that the machines turned out to be "unfit for use", this is belied by the inspection certificates which state that delivery was only accepted after a complete inspection run by the works director.

Once the initial round of mudslinging was over last fortnight, the protagonists of the tussle became surprisingly silent. Like coy newly-weds on the morning after, both Malhotra International and Wiltech fell silent once they had finished ripping at each other. Queries on the controversy to S.N. Malhotra, Asian Cables Executive Director A.H. Kaji, instrumental in promoting and setting up Wiltech, and Arun Nanda, head of Wiltech's advertising agency, Rediffusion, were all met with an equally unequivocal reply: "No comment".

Added Kaji reluctantly: "Our advertisement stated what we consider to be the truth. But we don't wish to enter into any controversy now." From a group of people who were virtually tearing at each other's throats only a few days before this, the protestations come as a complete surprise. Perhaps they are saving their strength for the next round in July, when Wiltech products actually hit the market.

—CHANDER UDAY SINGH

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Our greatest reward: the smile on your face.

We're doing a lot to earn your smile.

On board, our hospitality goes beyond the namaste. Our friendly, sari-clad hostesses are well-trained in the fine art of making you feel at home. They speak your language, cater to your needs. In short, they help make the moments 'fly'!

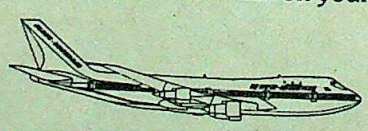
To delight your palate — there's a richly-varied menu — Continental and Indian. With special vegetarian dishes too! The finest in in-flight entertainment, including Hindi movies. For First Class passengers, the luxury of the Slumberette, and Maharajah lounges at selected airports. For business travellers, an exclusive upper-deck Executive Class cabin.

Enjoy the facilities of computerised reservations for instant confirmation of worldwide bookings.

We offer you a choice of the widest number of flights — fast, direct flights to the largest number of destinations from India, with a punctuality record we are proud of!

For us, there's nothing more rewarding than the smile on your face.

Official Carrier
IX ASIAN GAMES, DELHI 1982



एअर-इंडिया
AIR-INDIA
The flag is flying high.

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...rala's Cashless Crop

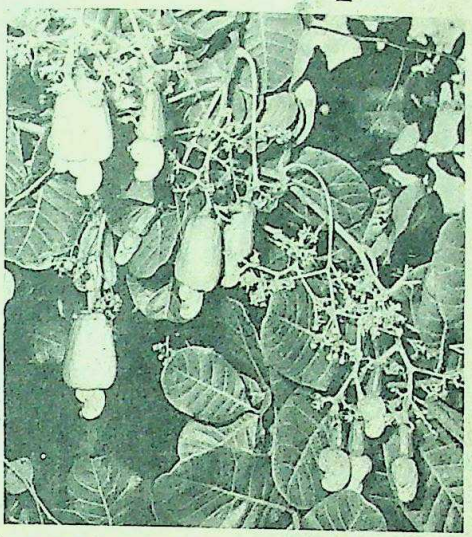
...ITH all 208 cashew processing ...ctories in Kerala having ...wned their shutters and thrown ...ple out of work, the state's ...one cashew industry faces an un-...ed crisis. The new cashew crop has ...ing into the market, but some ...es of processed nuts from last ...still lie unsold. This has locked up ...e of badly needed funds at a time ...processors are under pressure from ...s to clear loans and are hard put to ...oney for buying up the new crop ...processing.

...s only the latest in a series of ...ffered by an industry vital to ...its employment potential and to ...ry as a major foreign exchange ...The shifting of processing activities ...uring Tamil Nadu, the decanali-...raw cashew imports and a sharp ...e local procurement price have all ...d to the gloom now pervading ...e nerve-centre of Kerala's cashew

...g Moves: The shift to Tamil Nadu ...a decade ago; it costs only Rs 625 ...a tonne of cashew there against Rs ...rala. The migration gained mom-...st year when the Central ...nt decanalised the import of raw ...d placed it under open general ...The cashew industry had lobbied for ...tion on the plea that the canalising ...e Cashew Corporation of India—a ...y of the State Trading Corporation ...s not providing sufficient raw nuts ...s in Kerala.

...ardhanan Pillai, president of the ...India Cashew Manufacturers' ...n, had welcomed the decanali-...t year; but that decision has only ...e cashew barons to divert supplies ...Nadu with greater ease. Earlier, ...system of monopoly procurement ...that the Tamil Nadu units had to ...supplies of raw nuts smuggled ...Kerala.

...thurai in Tamil Nadu, 30 km ...vandrum, now threatens to beat ...as the main centre of the cashew ...In 1970 Kerala had 208 cashew ...g units, while Tamil Nadu had 22. ...Kerala still has only 208 factories ...il Nadu has 294, most of them in ...rai and nearby Marthandom. ...all, while the Tamil Nadu factories ...ually throughout the year, the ...ts last year enjoyed barely 80 ...days.



Fruit-laden cashew tree: unprecedented glut

Threatened Industry: Said P. Gangadharan Pillai, a leading exporter of cashew kernels and a former president of the Federation of Indian Exporters' Organisations (FIEO): "High prices, volatile labour and unscrupulous unions have finished the cashew industry in Kerala." What Pillai fails to mention is that the processing costs are lower in Tamil Nadu bacause of the vastly lower piece-rates paid to the workers there. Unlike Kerala, Tamil Nadu has no effective minimum wage legislation.

Weighed down by its long-term problems, Kerala's cashew industry could nevertheless have done without the latest shocks. In a controversial move last month, the state Government reduced the purchase price of cashew nuts by Rs 1.50 per kg to Rs 6.50 in Malabar and Rs 6.20 in Travancore—a decision seen by many as one that could break the back of the cultivators. But a spokesman of the Kerala State Cashew Development Corporation (KSCDC) argued that the prices fixed earlier were not workable since there had been a crash on the international markets.

Russia has been India's principal buyer in the last few years, accounting for over two-thirds of the total exports of 30,000 tonnes, valued at Rs 171 crore in 1980-81. But that country has now switched from cashew to almonds. This was only to be expected because, while almonds were earlier more expensive than cashew, today cashew sells at $2.50 per kg and almonds sell at $1.15.

Nevertheless, the Soviet Union did buy 4,000 tonnes last month. That still leaves 12,000 tonnes unsold from last year's crop, while for 5,000 tonnes of the new crop procured by the monopoly purchaser, the Kerala State Cooperative Marketing Federation (KSCMF), no buyers can be found. Local farmers are expected to bring in another 50,000 tonnes in the next few months and will probably smuggle the rest of the 120,000-tonne crop to Tamil Nadu. To add to the glut, substantial consignments of imported nuts have also come in.

Uncertain Future: Almost no one is lifting the raw cashew, since both processors and exporters are fighting credit battles with their banks. Even the 34 factories belonging to the state-sponsored KSCDC are lying closed. With raw cashew prices slashed, the fate of the growers has become a matter of concern. R. Hali, a well-known Trivandrum-based agricultural expert, argues that while Kerala's rubber growers are given very generous subsidies and loans, cashew growers are given only a tenth of that sum. Hali suggests that "land covered under cashew should be declared as plantations, as in the case of coffee, tea, cardamom and rubber. Otherwise the cashew cultivators will go in for other more lucrative crops."

Meanwhile, in Delhi, the Commerce Ministry is reportedly knocking at Soviet doors, requesting them to lift the existing stocks of processed nuts. Even if the Soviets oblige, that still leaves the problem of the 50,000 tonnes that will become available after processing in the next few weeks.

—SREEDHAR PILLAI

THE MARKETS

The Squeeze Is On

APRIL was always the cruellest month, even before the poet said so. The stock markets tumbled all along the line during the month and very few shares—mostly in the south—escaped bear hammering. But for the shortage of floating stocks brought about by sizeable purchases earlier by financial institutions, the fall would have been still steeper. The reduction of the cash reserve ratio by the Reserve Bank—which is expected to release Rs 240 crore or so of credit—should have helped, but did not.

There are signs that recession is spreading from textiles to other sectors, but the Government is of the view that prices have to be tackled first and recession can wait. Since no respite is possible until about June when a fresh review of the credit policy will be made, investors should keep their fingers crossed and hope for the best until summer.

Buying Wave: By then, however, the invasion by convertible debentures will be in full swing. Several large issues are in the pipeline which between them will have siphoned off something like Rs 150 crore from

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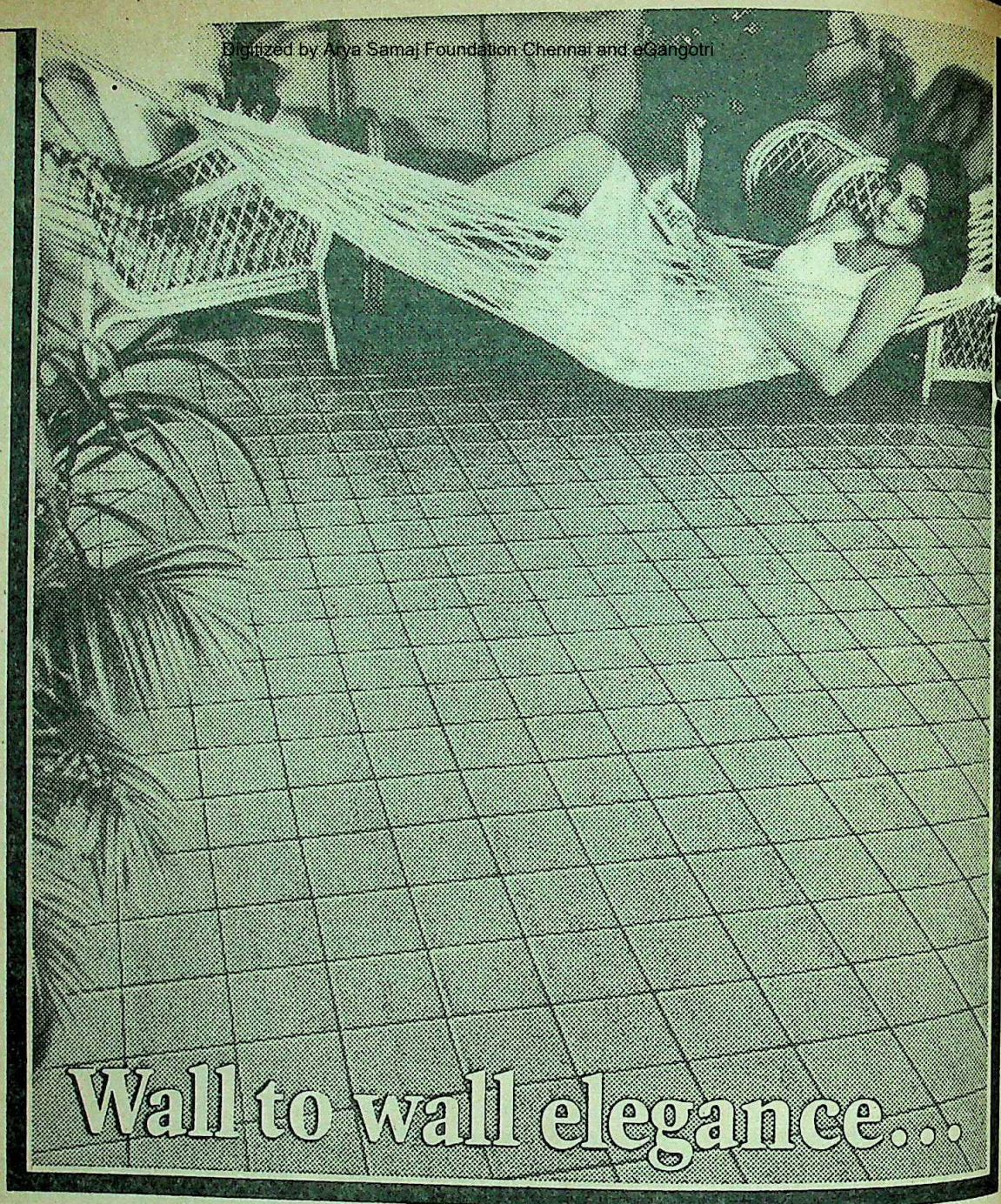

now with Johnson Floor Tiles

A perfect blend of beauty and economy — that's what you get with Johnson Floor Tiles.

Made of rugged, durable ceramic, with colours deeply embedded in them by a special process.

In 6″ × 6″ squares and 8½″ × 4¼″ oblongs, giving you the chance to play with shades and shapes for unusual patterns.

So easy to maintain too! Just a quick wipe with a wet cloth makes them good as new.

A new concept in Indian flooring, Johnson Floor Tiles last a lifetime.

You couldn't get a better buy!

JOHNSON FLOOR TILES

Where beautiful floorings begin.

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ACTIVE STOCKS

	Close 16.4.82	Change on Fortnight
...ai Ambalal Sarabhai	14.75	−0.25
...0 Ashok Leyland	49.50	nil
...0 Associated Cement	290.00	−21.00
...0 Atlas Copco	61.00	−1.50
...0 Bajaj Auto	1,385.00	10.00
...0 Ballarpur	40.80	−0.70
...0 Baroda Rayon	399.00	−12.00
...0 Bharat Gears	35.00	−1.00
...0 Birla Jute	31.50	1.30
...0 Blow Plast	59.50	1.00
...0 Bombay Dyeing	71.50	0.50
...0 Brooke Bond	21.30	−0.50
...0 Calcutta Electronic	15.80	−0.70
...0 Century Spinning	977.00	21.00
...0 Chemicals & Fibres	22.00	−0.60
...0 Colgate	160.00	16.00
...0 Crescent Dyes	13.60	−0.10
...0 Delhi Cloth Mills	36.31	0.75
...0 Dunlop	19.85	−0.55
...0 East India Hotels	18.50	0.25
...0 Elecon	32.00	−3.00
...0 Escorts	41.50	−2.50
...0 Food Specialities	39.50	−0.50
...0 Garware Nylon	45.25	2.25
...0 General Electric	26.30	0.05
...0 Guest Keen Williams	32.80	nil
...0 Gujarat Fertilisers	413.00	7.00
...0 Hindustan Aluminium	44.25	−1.35
...0 Hindustan Lever	52.00	−1.00
...0 Hindustan Motors	25.40	−1.84
...0 Hoechst Dyes	25.00	−1.50
...0 Indian Aluminium	19.00	−0.60
...0 Indian Cable	19.60	0.10
...0 Indian Dyestuff	201.00	−9.00
...0 Indian Explosives	22.90	−0.70
...0 Indian Hotels	62.00	1.00
...0 Indian Organic	26.50	−2.50
...0 Indian Oxygen	34.10	−0.15
...0 Ingersoll-Rand	133.00	1.00
...0 Ion Exchange	33.00	nil
...0 ITC	23.60	0.40
...0 Jaysbree Tea	34.90	1.90
...0 J.K. Synthetics	67.80	2.60
...0 Kesoram	53.10	0.90
...0 Kinetic Engineering	119.00	−11.00
...0 Kothari (Madras)	25.00	−0.25
...0 Larsen & Toubro	52.75	−1.25
...0 Madura Coats	15.25	−0.25
...0 Mahindra & Mahindra	47.00	−2.00
...0 Metal Box	12.90	−0.70
...0 Mukand Iron	29.00	2.50
...0 National Organic	190.00	−7.00
...0 Nirlon	36.00	−1.00
...0 Orient Paper	39.00	−1.90
...0 Peico Electronics	28.50	0.70
...0 Ponds India	69.00	−5.00
...0 Premier Auto	342.00	17.00
...0 Ranbaxy	26.50	−0.50
...0 Raymond	54.25	−4.00
...0 Reliance	136.00	nil
...0 Shaw Wallace	27.00	nil
...0 Siemens India	60.00	2.00
...0 Shriram Fibres	46.25	−1.19
...0 SPIC	14.50	−0.25
...0 Sylvania & Laxman	24.50	0.50
...0 Tata Chemicals	46.00	−3.00
...0 Tata Steel	379.00	28.00
...0 Telco	490.00	10.00
...0 Texmaco	50.00	−1.25
...0 Union Carbide	24.80	−0.45
...0 Utha Martin Black	28.15	0.15
...0 Voltas	230.00	−4.00
...0 Zuari Agro	21.00	−0.10

the market. A good deal of the funds will come from financial institutions; but since quite a few debentures will be offered on a rights basis, a buying wave cannot be ruled out.

Not that all convertible debenture issues have been a success. Last year, out of 10 companies which came out with such issues only three—Kirloskar Brothers, Union Carbide and ITC—are said to have been a success. The revised guidelines announced last week are helpful but not all that much. Among the companies in the queue for convertible debenture issues are Ranbaxy Laboratories, Gwalior Rayon, Nirlon, Indian Hotels (Taj group), Guest Keen Williams, Zenith Steel Pipes and Ahmedabad Advance (a Tata company).

Since the success of a debenture issue is linked up with the share price, one should expect company managements to try their best to keep the price up, at least until the issue is over. This has been the case in most convertible debenture issues so far, and the trend should continue. Apart from this, there is the added advantage of getting hold of some debentures on a rights basis. Such companies, therefore, offer excellent short-term opportunity for profit, whatever the intrinsic value of the shares.

Prospects: Apart from this, there is really not much going for the markets right now. According to preliminary reports, the last financial year was a good one for foodgrains and cash crops, which should be a plus factor. There are also reports of sizeable investments in new projects—a figure of Rs 4,000 crore is mentioned in respect of Gujarat alone—and this is also a good sign. Most companies are expanding; there is hardly a company report that does not list new projects or additions to old ones. In the long term, therefore, the outlook continues to be hopeful, if not exactly bullish. It is in the short term that things are a little uncertain, until perhaps the next monsoon, when the gloom that has settled on the markets following the credit squeeze should lift a little.

There is also another side to the story. Why not weed out old shares that have obviously outlived their usefulness and use the money to buy some convertible debentures? There must be many dead ducks in the portfolio which in any case must be ripe for spring cleaning. The market did fairly well last year but there are always black sheep in every flock. Quite a few chemical and aluminium shares have not kept pace with the market and are not expected to do well in the near future either. It would be good to make use of the current lull to clean up the portfolio in time for the next season which, despite the credit squeeze and other hurdles, might spring a pleasant surprise.

WORLD VALUE OF RUPEE

Country	Currency and Unit		TT Selling Rates(Rs)	TT Buying Rates(Rs)
Australia	As $	1	9.9709	9.8709
Austria	As Sch	100	56.4225	55.8415
Bahrain	Dinar	1	25.2391	24.9790
Bangladesh	Taka	100	43.5602	43.2404
Canada	Can $	1	7.7748	7.6912
Egypt	Egp £	1	11.3823	11.2988
France	Fr Frc	1	1.5172	1.5014
Hong Kong	HK $	1	1.6282	1.6118
Indonesia	Rupiah	100	1.4512	1.4405
Iran	Rial	100	11.5173	11.4140
Italy	It Lira	100	0.7081	0.7031
Japan	Jap Yen	100	3.9128	3.8721
Kenya	K Shilling	1	0.8955	0.8874
Kuwait	Dinar	1	33.0952	32.7468
Malaysia	Ml $	1	4.0486	4.0049
Mauritius	Rupee	1	0.8758	0.8694
Nepal	Rupee	1	0.7178	0.7126
Netherlands	D Glds	1	3.5706	3.5336
Pakistan	Rupee	1	0.8373	0.8095
Singapore	Sing $	1	4.4463	4.3998
Spain	Sp Pt	100	8.9080	8.8099
Sri Lanka	Rupee	1	0.4651	0.4546
Sweden	Sw Kr	1	1.6107	1.5936
Switzerland	Sw Frc	1	4.8720	4.8205
Tanzania	T Sch	1	1.0087	1.0013
Thailand	Baht	100	41.7090	41.3352
UK	Pound	1	16.7462	16.5961
USA	US $	1	9.5075	9.3750
UAE	Dihram	1	2.5885	2.5695
USSR	Rouble	1	12.8086	12.7344
W. Germany	DM	1	3.9643	3.9222

These rates were supplied by The Bank of Tokyo, Ltd., New Delhi and quoted between the Banks on April 21, 1982.

ECONOMIC TRENDS

	Latest	Change on month
PRICES		
ET Commodity Price Index, April 16		
(1969 – 70 = 100)	236.1	−2.4
Cereals	228.1	−3.9
Chemicals	279.2	−0.4
Cotton	194.5	−19.0
Industrial Fibres	164.9	−9.1
Sugar	219.0	−6.7
Textile Yarn	219.9	−1.2
Vegetable Oils	266.9	−5.5
Gold, Standard, April 17 (Rs per 10 gm)	1,755.00	−115.00
Silver, April 17 (Rs per kg)	2,680.00	20.00
SHARES		
ET Share Price Index, April 14		
(1969 – 70 = 100)	238.6	−11.2
Cement	137.5	−18.0
Chemicals	184.8	−15.7
Engineering	393.5	−32.5
Fertilisers	190.0	8.8
Man-made Fibres	500.0	24.0
Paper	456.2	−63.4
Rubber goods	154.4	−20.7
MONEY		(per cent)
Money Supply, Feb 26		0.4
Bank Deposits		0.9
Foreign Exchange Assets		−0.9

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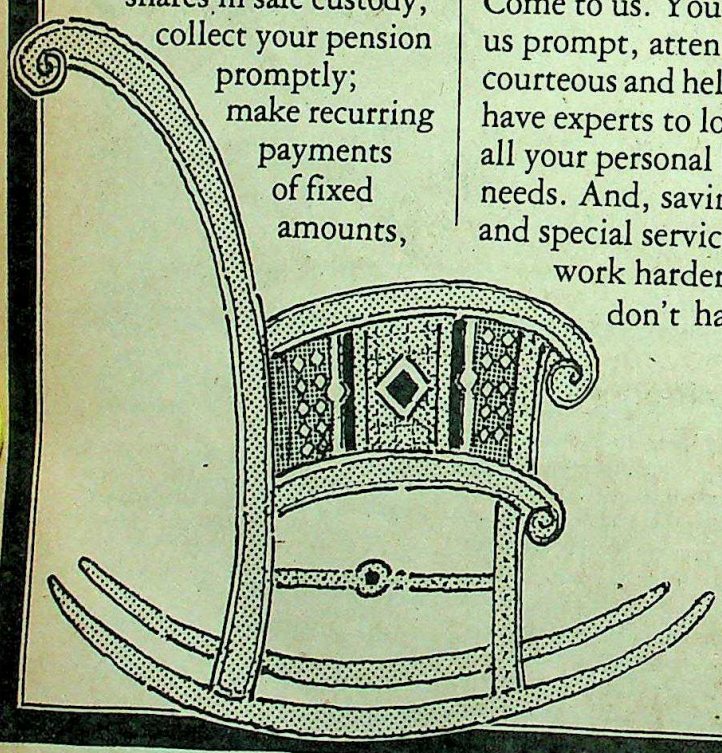
Grindlays can be a great help.

We can help you with our wide range of savings plans to suit your needs; keep your documents and shares in safe custody; collect your pension promptly; make recurring payments of fixed amounts, e.g., insurance premia, membership subscriptions, etc., automatically against your standing instructions; and free you to enjoy your well-earned retirement by taking over all your money-handling worries.

Come to us. You'll find us prompt, attentive, courteous and helpful. We have experts to look after all your personal banking needs. And, savings plans and special services that work harder so you don't have to.



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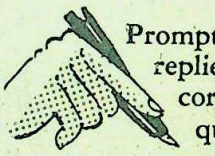
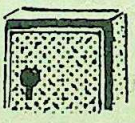
Efficient, personalised service



Prompt, comprehensive replies to correspondence/ queries

Regular payments of fixed amounts, e.g., insurance premia, membership subscriptions, recurring deposits, etc., against your standing instructions



Investment counselling on savings plans, safe custody facilities for documents, shares and other valuables

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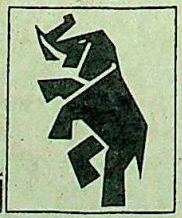

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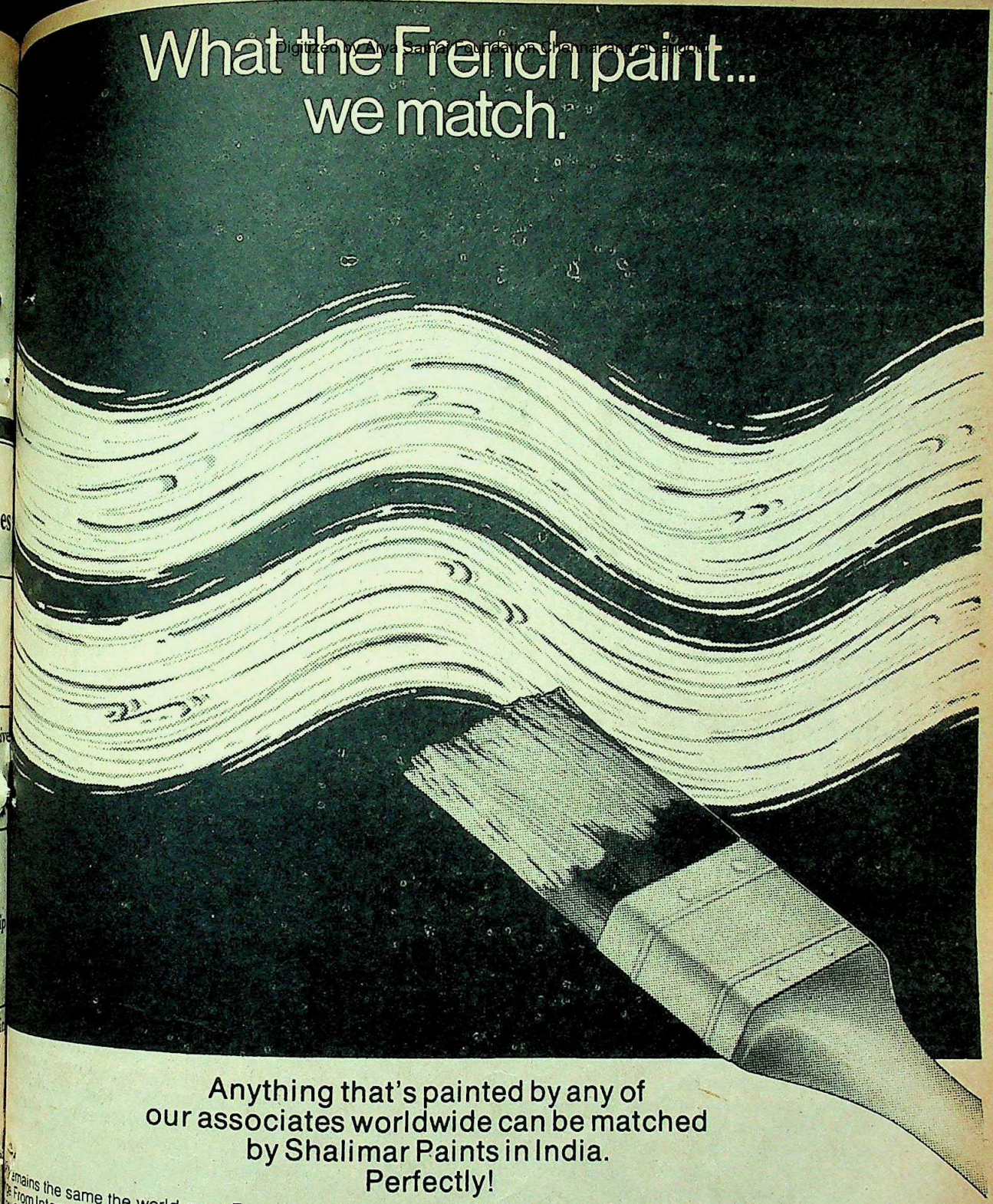

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CAR WARS

CHRYSLER has heated up the car market in the US by promising car buyers free maintenance, rust protection and basic repairs for five years or 50,000 miles. The programme excludes trucks and cars imported from Japan and will last 'for perpetuity' if it succeeds in raising sales, Chairman Lee A. Iacocca has said. The programme is more than twice as long as the two-year 24,000-mile guarantee and free maintenance offered by Ford Motor Car Co. The third car company and the largest, General Motors, has avoided such programmes but is offering car loans carrying interest of 12.8 per cent.

THE UNCLE SAM SCAM

AMERICA's underground or black money economy is about thrice as big as India's national income. Nearly a third of black incomes come from prostitution (Rs 12,000 crore last year), drugs (Rs 27,000 crore), fraud (Rs 9,000 crore), pornography (Rs 5,000 crore) and stolen goods (Rs 16,000 crore). Working 'off the books' has become a way of life in America and millions upon millions of otherwise respectable people—doctors, lawyers, accountants, electricians, contractors and others—are apparently engaged in legal activities but fail to report part or all of their income to avoid paying taxes. America's appetite for cash is so insatiable that the amount of currency in circulation has increased four-fold in 20 years, more than twice as rapidly as the increase in real gross national product.

TAPPING SOLAR ENERGY

ATLANTIC Richfield is planning to build the world's largest photovoltaic electric generating plant in California. The 1000-kilowatt plant, which is to produce enough electricity to serve the needs of about 400 families is expected to be completed by the year-end. The cost of the project is not disclosed but is expected to exceed Rs 10 crore. It will consist of 100 separate photovoltaic panels mounted on units designed to track the sun. Arco Solar, a unit of Atlantic Richfield, makes solar photovoltaic cells which convert sunlight directly into electricity. Atlantic Richfield is an oil company diversifying into alternative energy sources.

GROWTH STAKES

THE RICH get richer and the poor poorer. Saudi Arabia, one of the top 12 countries of the world in terms of per capita gross national product (GNP) had the fastest rate of growth during the 1970s and Bhutan, very close to the bottom of the league, had a negative growth rate. Saudi Arabia, with a per capita GNP of Rs 90,000 a year (nearly 50 times that of India) grew at 9.6 per cent a year (six times the Indian rate of growth) while Bhutan with a per capita GNP of Rs 720 a year, had growth rate of minus 0.1 per cent. For some reason, nearly all the countries of Africa including, surprisingly, Libya, also had negative growth rates, with A... leading the field with a rate of minus 10 per cent a year. Ac... to the World Bank's Atlas released last week Kuwait w... wealthiest country with a per capita income of Rs 180,000 a... and Bhutan the poorest.

BLUEPRINT FOR CHINA

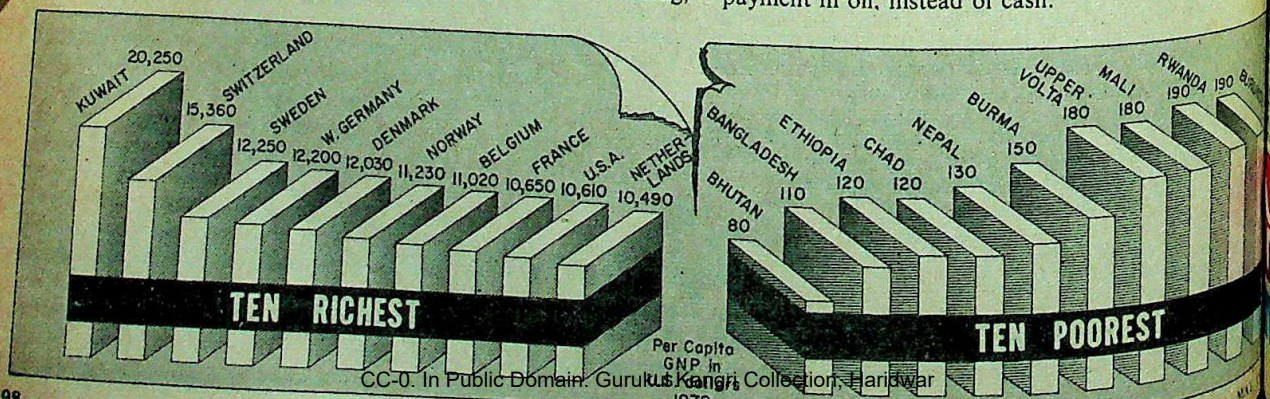
THE PROSPECT of China emerging as a major ... sparked serious thinking at the World Bank. A confi... nine-volume study of the situation in China by the bank's ... staff recommends four specific areas for restructuring ... economy—decontrol of prices, improving the allo... investment funds, giving importers and exporters more ... and eliminating current restrictions on the movement of ... from one part of the country to another—in short, opening ... economy, internally as well as externally, and very much in ... the suggestions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) ... in connection with its recent loan. The question, however, re... how strongly the bank and the IMF can press the Chinese t... the needed changes in exchange for the long-term loan... Chinese have already said that shortage of funds for eco... development remains a major problem.

JAPAN'S SLEEK LOSERS

JAPAN's trains may look sleek but they are losing over Rs ... a day, or more than Rs 3,000 crore a year. Japan Na... Railway (JNR) has accumulated losses of Rs 27,000 cro... liabilities of Rs 60,000 crore, more than India's national de... Government will soon be asked to act on a plan submitted ... prime minister's administrative reform council which in... breaking up JNR into several regional railways and hand... over to private management. JNR is understandably horrifie... are its unions. The Japan Socialist Party is dead set against ... up of the nationalised railway since the party draws mu... support from the trade unions, but some ruling party facti... also opposed to the privatisation move, for political reas...

OIL-FOR-CARS SWAP

TALBOT Motors, the British subsidiary of the Fren... company Peugeot, is likely to reach a barter deal with ... ship car kits worth about Rs 2,000 crore in return for oil. T... for-cars swap, according to the London *Economist*, is ... arranged through a London merchant bank and will be t... such arrangement between British companies and an OPEC m... Negotiations have reached the last hurdle—agreement ... acceptable price for the crude oil to be supplied by Iran in e... for Talbot's knock-down car kits. Libya is also pressing ... similar agreement with its suppliers and there are reports of ... contractors working on Libyan jobs being asked ... payment in oil, instead of cash.



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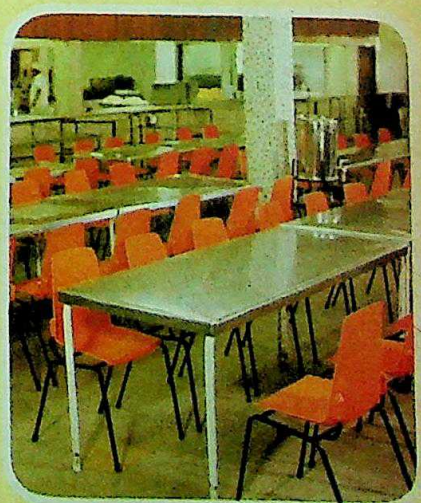

...derna – the versatile seating system

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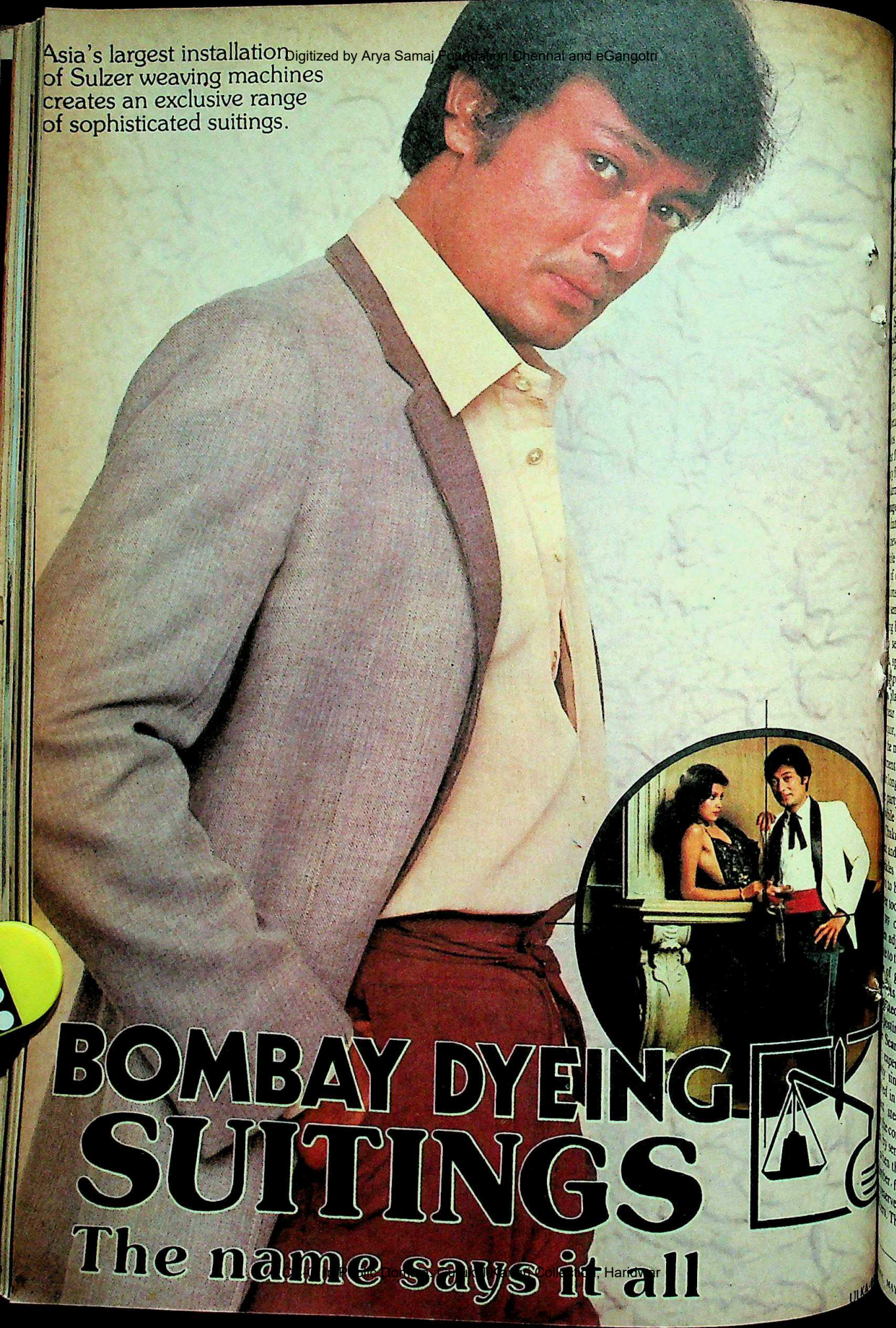
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...FRONTIER FORCE

...hool For Scandal

...RE is no better fertiliser for scan... than secrecy judging by the rate ...which scandals are sprouting in ...Indian intelligence agencies. The ...the more secret the outfit, the ...ger the scandal.

...of the chief culprits is the little-...cial Frontier Force (SFF) head-...ed Establishment 22, a remote, ...anded base at Chakrata, north of ...ow. Chakrata was the origin of a ...scandal that erupted last year ...AW, March 1-15, 1981) involving ...men women recruits. But though ...s of SFF personnel have cooled ...following the report, the outfit's ...for scandal has sprouted in other ...ming directions.

...gal Morale: The tragedy lies in ...at the scandals start at the very ...evitably filter downwards, doing ...e damage to morale and discip... ...f course, security. According to ...ts and reports from reliable ...enior officer from Establishment ...a brigadier, celebrated the marri... ...second daughter with unusual ...splendour—mostly at the un... ...payer's expense. The marriage ...place at a place known as Dak ...ear Chakrata and vehicles, man... ...ur, rations, tents and other stores ...e marriage were mobilised from ...ent 22.

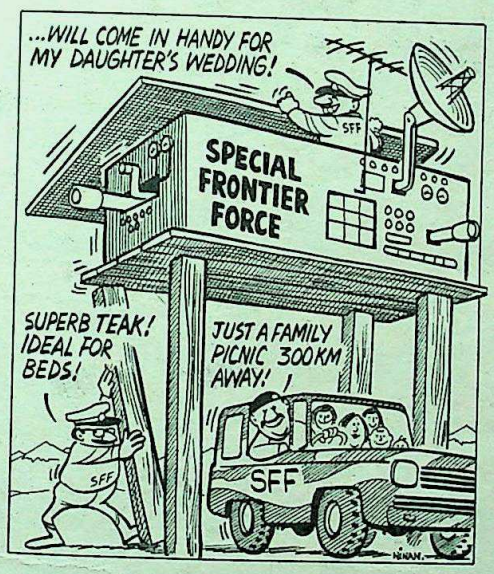
...ongas and two jeeps escorted the ...arty from Chandigarh to Dak ...e other vehicles were utilised ...Chakrata and Dehra Dun to ferry ...ed supplies. On paper, the use ...les was conveniently covered up ...to have been part of an exercise ...t took place.

...ff officer, Lt-Colonel Rajinder ...adjutant of Establishment 22, ...to the director, SFF, protesting at ...of government equipment, but ...ts brushed under the carpet. ...ved by the episode, requested ...posing back to his regiment.

...Scandals: Private weddings at ...xpense are not the establish... ...fin. Recently, the SFF camp ...ed in another scandal involving ...stealing of expensive forest ...the construction of private houses ...by senior SFF officers. The scandal ...when three SFF trucks loaded with ...reserve forest were intercepted by ...ther, felled by SFF personnel in ...ri. The man in charge of the SFF force was Captain Sultan Singh and in the altercation that followed, a forest guard was hit over the head with an axe handle and knocked unconscious.

The district forest officer reported the matter to the state Government in Lucknow and a court of inquiry was held but once again the affair was hushed up.

According to the sources, at least 30 truckloads of timber had already been despatched to Delhi for private use before the incident. Since the vehicles belong to a top secret force, they are exempted from border checks by the military or civilian police. Sources also allege that equipment sanctioned for construction of official buildings and training centres has also been diverted for private use of SFF officers by the same methods.



In fact, misuse of government vehicles seems to be a flourishing business in the SFF. Staff officers from New Delhi and Chakrata have developed a sudden fascination for trips to SFF bases in Gangtok, Leh and Kalimpong on "temporary duty". Naturally, they are accompanied by their families and utilise SFF transport and stay in government accommodation. Coincidentally, all these trips somehow occur during the tourist season.

Privileges Misused: Similarly, officers of intelligence agencies like RAW, SFF, SSB (Special Services Bureau) and ARC (Aviation Research Centre) are misusing the privilege given to them of travelling by ARC aircraft from Delhi, Chandigarh, Chakrata, Charbatia and Saharanpur to Leh. Under the provisions, officers belonging to any of these outfits are allowed to transport their families to Leh at a price equivalent to the bus fare from the nearest railhead to Leh. The officers put the trips down as "official" and claim travel and dearness allowances while in reality they are only taking their families for a cheap holiday. More serious, however, is the flagrant breach of security since at most times ARC aircraft are engaged in top secret missions.

In fact, investigations have revealed that on the return trips, ARC aircraft are filled with smuggled goods purchased in Siliguri, towns on the Nepal border or in Sikkim. Since ARC aircraft are outside the purview of normal customs or airport checks, the misuse has gone undetected.

Much of the racketeering and misuse of government equipment and funds is a direct result of the type of people currently serving in the force. Originally intended as a highly mobile strike force to liberate Tibet if the need arose, SFF has now become a refuge for retired or superseded army or police officers and ex-emergency commissioned officers. Incredibly, there is not a single serving officer in the SFF headquarters in New Delhi. Inevitably, the officers are more interested in planning and taking care of their own future than in the future of the force.

Internal Collusion: There are also any number of officers who had qualified as paratroopers some years ago but have never undergone the required yearly refresher course, and are still drawing special paratrooper allowance. By virtue of massive internal collusion, exemption certificates are easily obtained. Under the regulations, paratroopers who fail to undergo training for more than a year forfeit the allowance.

That the myriad scandals are flourishing unchecked is only an indication that it is being done with the full knowledge of officers based in New Delhi and the office of the director-general (security) which is in overall charge of these organisations. Sources in New Delhi have confirmed that all this is hardly news. In which case, it is surprising that another little-known incident involving Establishment 22 has never been re-examined. The case involves a huge cache of weapons and ammunition captured during the 1971 Bangladesh War which was secretly transported to Chakrata. The cache included over 100 handguns of various makes, over 200 civilian rifles like 12 bores and an equal number of rifles. The weapons were stored at a place called Kalsi depot. Two years ago, a mysterious fire broke out at the depot. According to the official report, all the weapons were destroyed in the fire and only a cursory investigation was carried out. But viewed in the context of the current goings-on at Chakrata, there is bound to be much more to the affair than meets the official eye.

—DILIP BOBB

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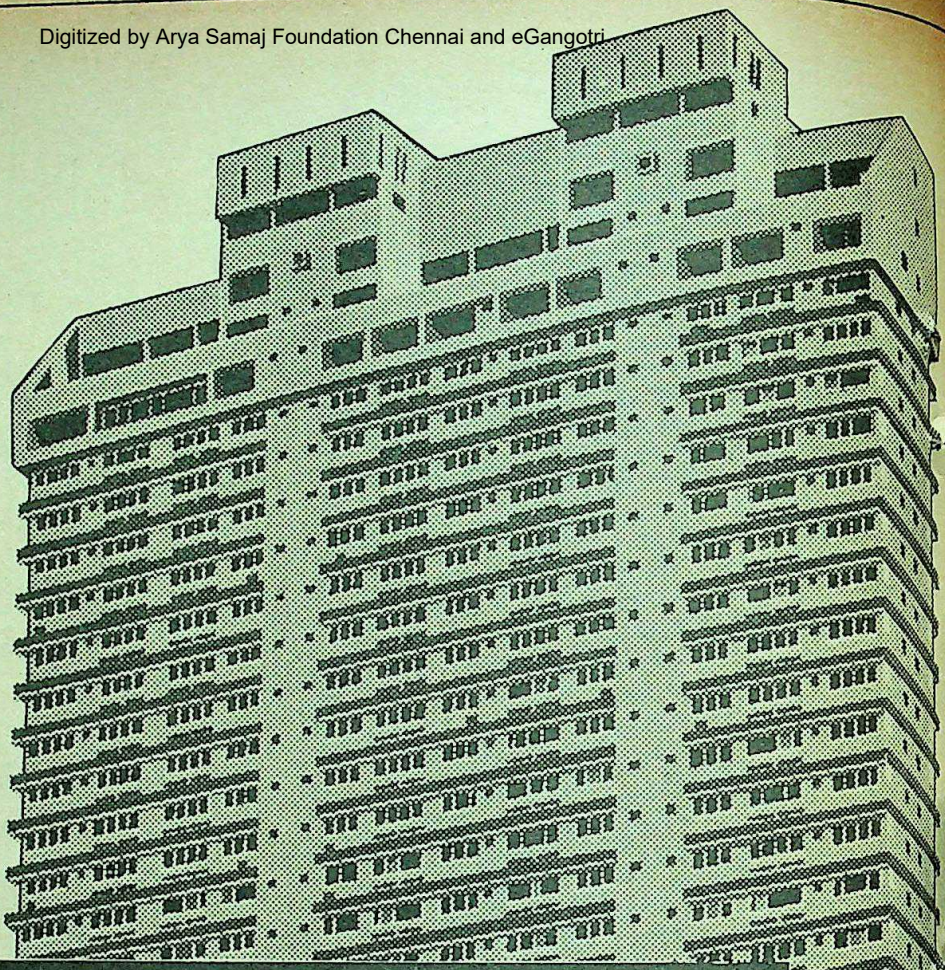

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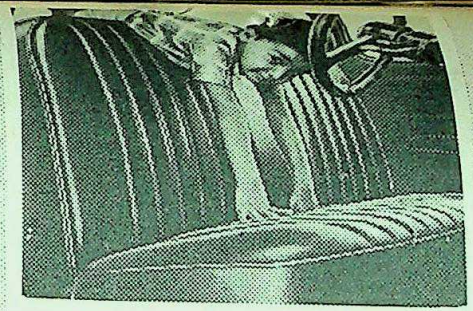

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SADVICHAR PARIVAR

Quiet Samaritans

EVERY once in a while, Mumtaz Ahmed, serving a life sentence at the Sabarmati Jail, Ahmedabad, is released on parole. Freed of the cramped confines of the prison, he makes his way to a little one-room dwelling in Lal Darwaza. There, he is welcomed by three children and their mother, Pramilla Fagare. After spending some time with the family, as an uncle might with his nephews and their mother, Ahmed returns to Sabarmati Jail. Pramilla is not, of course, his real sister and her three children are no relation to the lifer, but they have a happy time together—despite the fact that Ahmed killed Pramilla's husband, Chandrakant, nine years ago.

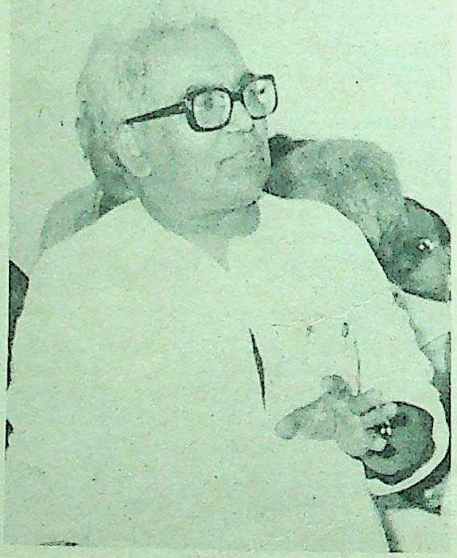
Pramilla might not have found the strength to forgive had it not been for the Sadvichar Parivar, an unobtrusive social service organisation based in Ahmedabad. Parivar workers regularly visit the jail to give moral and religious lectures and cheer up the convicts, and on one such occasion, Ahmed told them that he was repenting the impulse that had driven him to stab Chandrakant one night in 1973 outside the textile mill where they worked. Pramilla was informed of this change of heart and one morning in 1977 she arrived at the jail with a *rakhi*, and tied it on the wrist of a moist-eyed Ahmed.

Sympathy: The repentant Ahmed and the forgiving Pramilla are just one of the many successes that the Sadvichar Parivar has to its credit. Founded 25 years ago by Haribhai Panchal, 54, the Parivar is revered throughout Gujarat for its simple approach to human calamity, the healing touch of sympathy. Panchal himself epitomises the down-to-earth philosophy of his workers—dressed always in a crumpled but clean white pyjama and kurta, he has stuck to the road charted out for him by the words of a dying father: "Be instrumental in good being done." From the time he published a 32-page booklet, *Amritbindu*, a collection of the thoughts of philosophers, Panchal's life has been one endless and dedicated stint of ministering to the sick, the poor, the depressed and the needy.

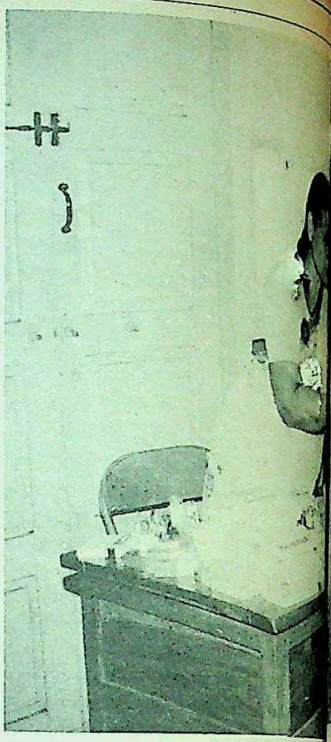
If there has been no shortage of such people, there has also not been a lack of willing Samaritans. When Panchal started, there were only four others to help—Jitendra Patel, who works in a textile mill, Chandulal Prajapati, the editor of a spiritual Gujarati monthly and Dahyabhai Modi and Bhupendra Banker, businessmen. Today, the first five have been joined by many others—the Parivar maintains a core list of 150—all voluntary workers, all shying away from publicity. The Parivar also has 18 administrative and clerical staff but has developed without the stultifying trappings of a 20th century organisation. Says Panchal: "The Sadvichar Parivar has no leader. All workers are leaders."

Ample Funds: It is perhaps this all-pervading humility that makes the Parivar so attractive to philanthropists. Last year it collected Rs 60 lakh through donations and by way of income from its publications. It has a reserve fund of Rs 37 lakh. Says Panchal: "We never face a shortage of money because sensitive souls are always around." The Parivar can thus rehabilitate the handicapped, run hospitals, carry relief to areas struck by disaster, put up free health camps, plant trees, and cremate unclaimed dead bodies.

In fact, finances have never been a problem. Donations pour in from industrial magnates and labourers. Every two or three years, the Parivar organises discourses by religious heads such as Morari Bapu and Dongre Maharaj. The discourses attract a lakh of people every day and the Parivar ropes in about Rs 7 lakh during the programme as donations. Panchal himself is financially secure—he owns an iron casting foundry in Ahmedabad, and also holds ancestral property. His son Ashok takes care of the business, leaving Panchal all the time to run his beloved Parivar.



Panchal: pragmatic sympathy



ITS forte is human beings. K... Ranchodlal murdered his wife ... and was in Sabarmati Jail for se... before the Parivar's healing words r... out to him. His wife's relatives forga... and today, he sends his mother-in-... every month. Mehram Arjun wa... mned to die and in a revengeful m... his friends in Damnagar village in ... district to "fix" those who had ... against him. After Parivar workers ... whole day with him, talking of God, ... and love, Arjun broke into tears a... fessed he had killed six men, not ... allowed the workers to tape his last ... and his body was accompanied by ... when it arrived in Damnagar. Th... villagers calmed down when they h... posthumous advice to forget, forg... live in harmony.

In a 135-acre plot at Ut... Gandhinagar, the Parivar has s... school, a hostel and a workshop f... handicapped inmates, from the r... who are afraid to go back to th... Bhimji Jhala, 25, lost both hands ... and limped about with a paralysed ... after contact with a high-tensio... years ago. Asked to fend for himself ... brother, Jhala took to begging. H... able existence ended when a waite... Jamnagar hotel brought him ... Sadvichar Parivar Viklang ... Kendra. Rehabilitating him is ... impossible as he cannot be fitted ... ficial limbs, but Jhala is learning ... only leg and teeth to make co... swears: "I'll never beg again."

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igure distributing free medicines in edabad hospital and (right) d a lifer, in jail: the healing touch

l's favourite line is "sympathy is eatment" and it is probably sym- is curing 18-year-old Ishwar tally handicapped person whose mped him at the Kendra after egular violent rampages at home. since shown an extraordinary arpentry, has stopped throwing nd even sends money home. Its h such people has encouraged the embark on an ambitious expan- mme: the complex at Uvarsad biggest of its kind in the country, ed to cost Rs 1 crore and, when ll boast of an auditorium, a laboratory, a stadium and a ool. Says A.P. Trivedi, director: the rural disabled is our concern."

People: Lessons are always be- hen the Macchu dam near on August 11, 1979, Parivar along with those of the Rashtriya ak Sangh, pulled up their pants cleaning up the debris, burning g bodies. They brought in relief lakh—and for the first time their concept of free aid was g. People turned greedy—in one ny as 34 kerosene stoves were ously, the generous relief pum- Parivar and other organisations the moral backbone of the s a Parivar worker: "We will never again give free supplies."

The volunteers put this to the test in Morvi itself. Workers announced to a crowd of 150 that they would have to help in cleaning up the town if they wanted the supplies. Only two came forward; the rest dispersed. In later days, Parivar volunteers had a trying time: they were openly abused and were charged with corruption and misappropriation of funds and goods. But the workers stuck to their motto of 'no work, no relief' and the tide turned in their favour. Citizens of Morvi joined them in cleaning up the shattered city and only then were relief supplies resumed.

There have been other moments of frustration. In the 1967 Bihar famine, volunteers rushed supplies to Bhavnathpur in Palamau district. But the villagers demanded to be paid for unloading food meant for them in the first place. When floods struck Balia in Uttar Pradesh Parivar workers distributing blankets were accosted by political workers who demanded that the blankets be handed over to them for distribution. The Parivar avoids politics like the plague, and refused. Later that night its workers paid the price—their tents were heavily stoned.

Blessings: These are incidental hazards, however. For every curse that the Samaritans from Gujarat draw, there are a thousand blessings. The Adivasis of Dharampur in south Gujarat have good reason to welcome the Parivar—it has liberated them from the clutches of grain merchants who used to fleece them in lean periods. The poor Adivasis would borrow grain and would have to repay three times the measure after the harvest. The Parivar distributed 67 tonnes of grain in 1974, asking them to repay whenever possible. Nearly 85 per cent of the Adivasis did, and the grain thus collected was used to create a grain bank. Today the bank, entirely managed by the Adivasis, has about 100 tonnes of grain in stock.

The Parivar has lately been concentrating on the environment. It has made a forest of 4,500 fruit trees in Kelia Vasna in Gujarat's Dholka taluk. A massive afforestation programme is on at Uvarsad too—last year 17,000 saplings were planted. Other constructive works include the building of over 3,500 houses for the flood-affected in various parts of Gujarat. Despite its growing presence, the Parivar does not wish to spread all over the country. Says a worker: "We don't want to get lost with a big label."

Its work stands the test of time. The best example of this is Mumtaz Ahmed and Pramilla Fagare. While in jail, Ahmed had made a wooden model of a temple and after Pramilla acknowledged him as her brother he presented it to her and it now stands in her simple home, adorned with Hindu idols. Ahmed also gave her a saree and Rs 501 in cash. Pramilla regularly visits him in jail and once took care of his sick son, arranging for medicines from the Parivar's dispensary. Asserts the widow: "If I had not forgiven Ahmed, he would have been miserable all his life. If he prospers, I'll be happy." The heartening story of a reformed murderer is just the reward Panchal and his gentle band thrive on. The good work goes on.

—RAMESH MENON

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e Island Scare

e CURRENT confrontation and
-rattling by Britain and
rentina over the Falkland Islands
e had an unexpected fallout in
"Argentina has done us a fa-
y a high-ranking naval officer;
rnment will now worry more
n off-shore islands." The op-
hardly misplaced. In the wake of
land Islands crisis, Naval
ters has been buzzing with activity
and maps have been rolled out to
er look at the defence of India's
lands.

e rather gloomy predictions have
result. Naval officers openly admit
foreign power like the US was so
e seizure of most
t islands—the
s and Nicobar. Lac-
d Minicoys—could
ished fairly easily.
nior naval source:
e a great deal in the
ears to protect the
it isn't enough."

ing Factor: So far,
consolidation of the
ds has been centred
e strategic Andaman
islands. The coun-
integrated command
at of Port Blair under
rn Naval Command
des several naval
army brigade and a
dron which is to be
re shortly. But the
s and Minicoys on
ern coast have been
ected in terms of security largely
re have been no foreign claims on
e the eastern islands which have
t to dispute with Indonesia. But
creasing superpower presence in
Ocean and the Arabian Sea, the
d acquired added importance and
d crisis succeeded in bringing
re immediate focus.

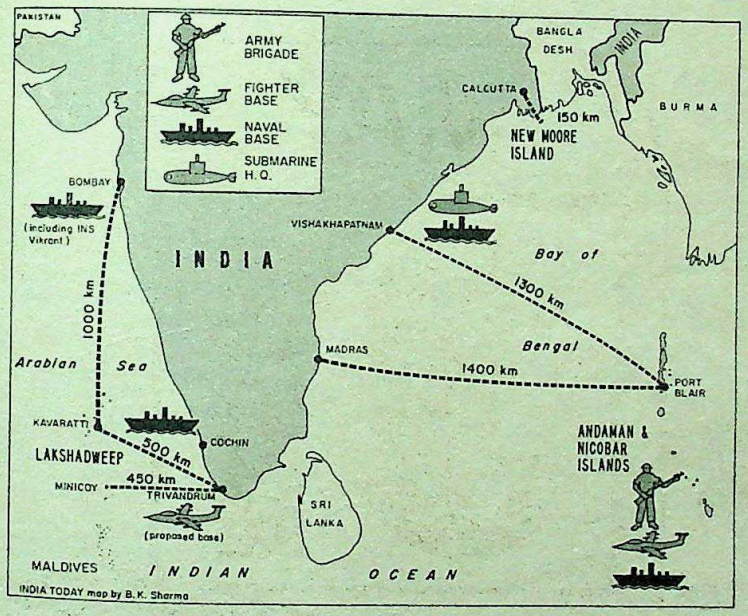
er step to safeguard the island has
n with the establishment of a
e at Trivandrum—but that is
ugh. "It's not just the islands,"
al source, "but the question of
e is a psychological dimension
a deterring of a potential adver-
e he even contemplates action. If
had kept even one frigate in the
Argentina would not have seized
" he says. He also points out that the Falklands are unimportant to Britain's security but the same hardly applies to India's islands which are close to the mainland.

Indian Presence: Other naval officers point to the relatively free run the superpowers have of the Indian Ocean. US battleships regularly steam to within 150 miles of the Indian coast and their P-3 Orion aircraft regularly track Indian naval movements. In that context, India's deterrent is in the form of a solitary IL-38 May maritime reconnaissance aircraft which occasionally keeps track of foreign naval ships in the Indian Ocean. Naval officers are convinced that a missile-equipped frigate off Diego Garcia, one near the Persian Gulf and another near the Malacca Straits would effectively establish an Indian presence in the Indian Ocean.

But that would require a much larger navy than Indian has at present, and particularly larger numbers of the Leander, Rajput and Godavari class of frigates, of which a total of 17 will be in service by the late '80s. Naval officials feel that India should be building at least two destroyers and frigates every year—twice the rate that is likely to be achieved, or even sanctioned, by 1985.

The other shortfall lies in the inadequate air cover at sea, both carrier and land-based. This is reflected in the constant tug-of-war between the navy and the air force. Naval Headquarters are critical of the IAF's refusal to heed the requirement of long-range aircraft to cover the seas. "The operational boys understand the requirement," complains a naval source, "but Air Headquarters is only worried about Mirage 2000s and F-16s." The navy are pressing hard for at least three squadrons of aircraft like the British Tornado or the Soviet Fencer, backed up by aerial refuelling. Says a naval officer: "When you can send 16 aircraft, each carrying four tons of bombs or missiles 1,000 miles from your shores, people start taking you seriously."

Deficiencies: Another urgent requirement, according to Naval Headquarters, is more aircraft carriers. The Government has agreed to a mate for INS Vikrant but more are obviously required. Two other areas of deficiency are an amphibious lift consisting of at least one brigade with supporting arms, and nuclear submarines. According to reports the Soviets have made India an offer of nuclear subs, but the Defence Ministry is not convinced of their reliability.



Stripped of the island scare, however, what the navy is really wanting, and justifiably so, is a larger slice of the budget cake. According to them, this would come to roughly Rs 100 crore a year for the next decade for equipment alone and would be split evenly between the navy and the air force. Allowing for operational expenses, the total would hike the defence budget by around 25 per cent of the GNP. Argues a senior naval official: "Today we spend nearly Rs 4,500 crore in securing our northern and western borders. Thanks to 20 years of hard work, we're in very good shape on land. In that context, an extra Rs 1,200 crore to secure the sea frontier seems fairly reasonable." On paper, that is.

In real terms, unless the Defence Ministry is convinced of a potential threat to Indian islands it is unlikely to meet the navy's demands. Last fortnight, there were encouraging signs in Defence Minister R. Venkataraman's address to members of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee for his ministry. Detailing Pakistan's efforts to increase its naval strength, Venkataraman said this posed new challenges to the Indian navy and because of this the navy would have to be strengthened. He also revealed that the ministry had a long-term plan to strengthen the defences of the country's island territories. But that might not satisfy the navy which has chafed for too long at its step-sisterly treatment vis a vis the other two services. The Falkland issue thousands of miles away may have finally given them the lever they desperately need. —RAVI RIKHYE

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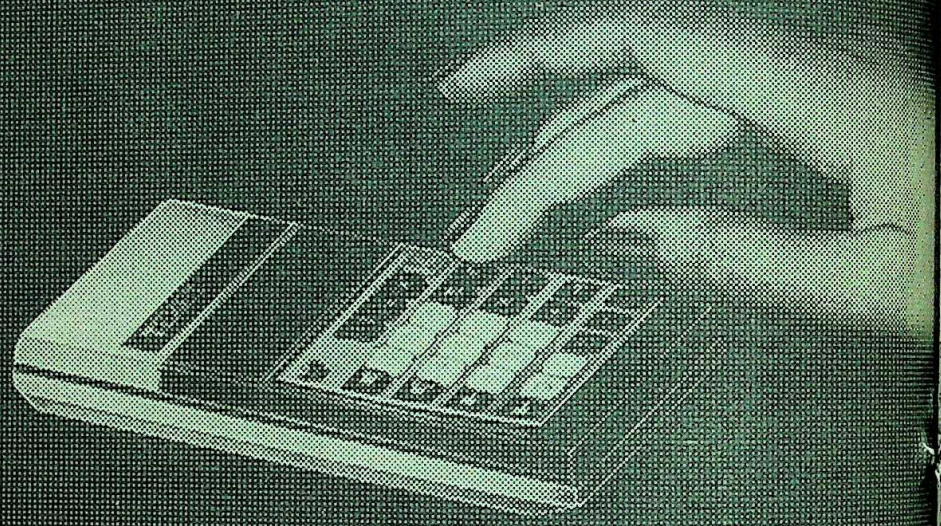

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ounded By Delay

committee finds that the search for copter initiated in 1970 to meet ents of the 1980s is, according to ticipations, not likely to fructify

ccounts Committee (76th report, 1981–82)

earch for a suitable basic trainer replace the old one, which com- 1965, was yet to materialise 980)—even after a lapse of 15

ccounts Committee (87th report, 1981–82)

REPORTS of the Public unts Committee (PAC) presented arliament last fortnight exposed ess that is Indian defence planning. The Government was causing avoidable delay in the an Armed Light Helicopter new trainer plane to replace the 2. Says Satish Aggarwal, PAC "Though the country has spent crore on infrastructure, train- es, collaboration fees to als and various officers of the inistry have made 22 foreign LH project is still in its infant dmits an officer at Air s: "If we don't get out of this ys will not get a new plane and en in 2000 A.D."

ason for the delay is lack of n between the Department of roduction, Hindustan Aero- (HAL), the Directorate-General Aviation (DGCA) and Air s—despite the appointment of een technical and administrative . The proposal to manufacture a e ALH was mooted soon after an committee headed by former ister C. Subramaniam submitted 969. The Centre approved, and into an agreement with the ern SNIAS for the design, and production of a helicopter d meet the requirements of the yment was $750,000 (Rs 54.59 made in 10 equal instalments.

g Needs: After receiving the Air rements (ASR) in 1971, HAL the Centre for grants of Rs 23.04 elopment and Rs 8.80 crore for ties. The Defence Ministry proposal in February 1976, four receiving it in early 1972, and by then costs had risen by Rs 9 crore. The first prototype was to fly by 1981-82 and production was to commence in 1984-85. SNIAS continued to receive its annual payments, but the Indian Air Force (IAF) changed its mind thrice in five years after the 1971 Indo-Pak war and in 1977 proposed the substitution of the earlier single-engine configuration with a twin-engine one.

The Defence Ministry explained to the PAC that "the world trend for armed helicopters has been of a twin-engine configuration". The PAC retorts: "Since the twin-engine helicopters were designed and developed in the 1960s the committee fail to appreciate on what considerations the ministry/Air Headquarters opted for single-engine helicopters in September 1970—a decision which they were obliged to reverse later." IAF officials refuse to admit it, but the real cause for the delay was the intense lobbying by agents of the multinational corporations to grab the contract for the design and the manufacturing collaboration for the air-frame and the engines.

PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

Satish Aggarwal: astonished

The Government said in part: "Discussions had to be held with the prospective reputed manufacturers of suitable engines like Rolls Royce (UK), Pratt & Whitney (Canada) and Turbomeca (France) to obtain design." Ministry officials stated further that a high-level technical committee visited France and West Germany last year and held detailed discussions with Aerospatiale of France and MBB of West Germany. Their report, which was received in July 1981, is yet to be examined.

Even finances committed to HAL were not released in time. Out of the budgetary provision of Rs 17 crore made between 1974 and 1981, only Rs 4 crore has actually been spent so far, delaying the procurement of equipment. HAL officials assert that they have made full use of the funds made available. Says Baljeet Kapoor, HAL chairman: "During the period when the project was given sanction, we did grow from zero to a strength of about 68 trained competent engineers who were ready for a take-off. The point is that we did not cut metal to make the helicopter but were close to being ready to do so."

Long Delay: The saga of the trainer aircraft is similar. In November 1965 the IAF started searching for a replacement for the HT-2 basic trainer, introduced in 1953. The new aircraft was to be introduced in 1970 but the IAF took more than 30 months to identify the changes to be made in the HT-2 and submitted its requirements only on May 3, 1968. It was also agreed that the Ravathi Mark II trainer aircraft with a tail-wheel undercarriage, being developed by the DGCA, would be a suitable replacement.

But in 1969 the IAF decided that the Ravathi was not suitable as it could not perform aerobatics, and asked for an aircraft fitted with a tricycle undercarriage. Says the PAC report: "It took about five and a half years for the Air Headquarters/Department of Defence Production to come to the conclusion that Ravathi Mark II being developed then by the DGCA would not be able to meet the requirements of the Air Force."

HAL's new feasibility report sent to the Government wasn't cleared for over five years. In 1974, HAL was directed to examine the feasibility of designing, developing and manufacturing a basic piston-engined trainer aircraft 'C' (HP-32). The new plane was to be operational during 1977-78 but it was only on July 31, 1981 that a prototype was flown and commercial production is expected to begin only during 1984-85.

The trainer plane delay has meant escalating costs—from Rs 6.4 lakh per unit in 1974-75 to Rs 19.25 lakh in 1980-81 and an expected Rs 25 lakh and more by 1984-85. But the most disturbing fact is that pilots are training on an unsafe plane—the HT-2 has been involved in as many as 43.09 incidents/accidents per 10,000 flying hours during 1978-79—one accident every 250 hours flown. Flying hours for trainees were reduced from an average of 40 to 30.

The PAC reports bring home the sad fact the India's defence needs are not likely to be met by indigenous development and production. Aggarwal puts it in a master understatement: "It is really unfortunate that the projects which should have been completed by now are still at the drawing board stage." And there they will remain, while agents for arms manufacturers continue to stalk the corridors of India's defence establishment.

—PRABHU CHAWLA

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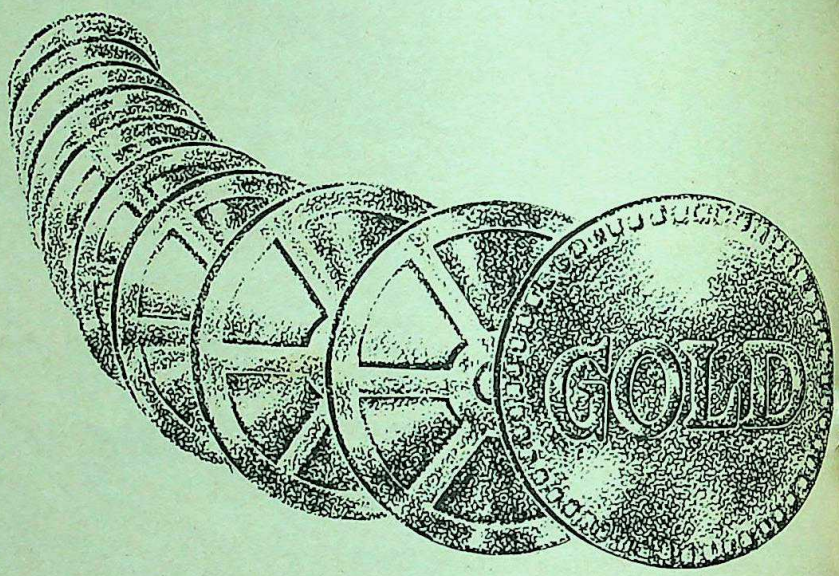

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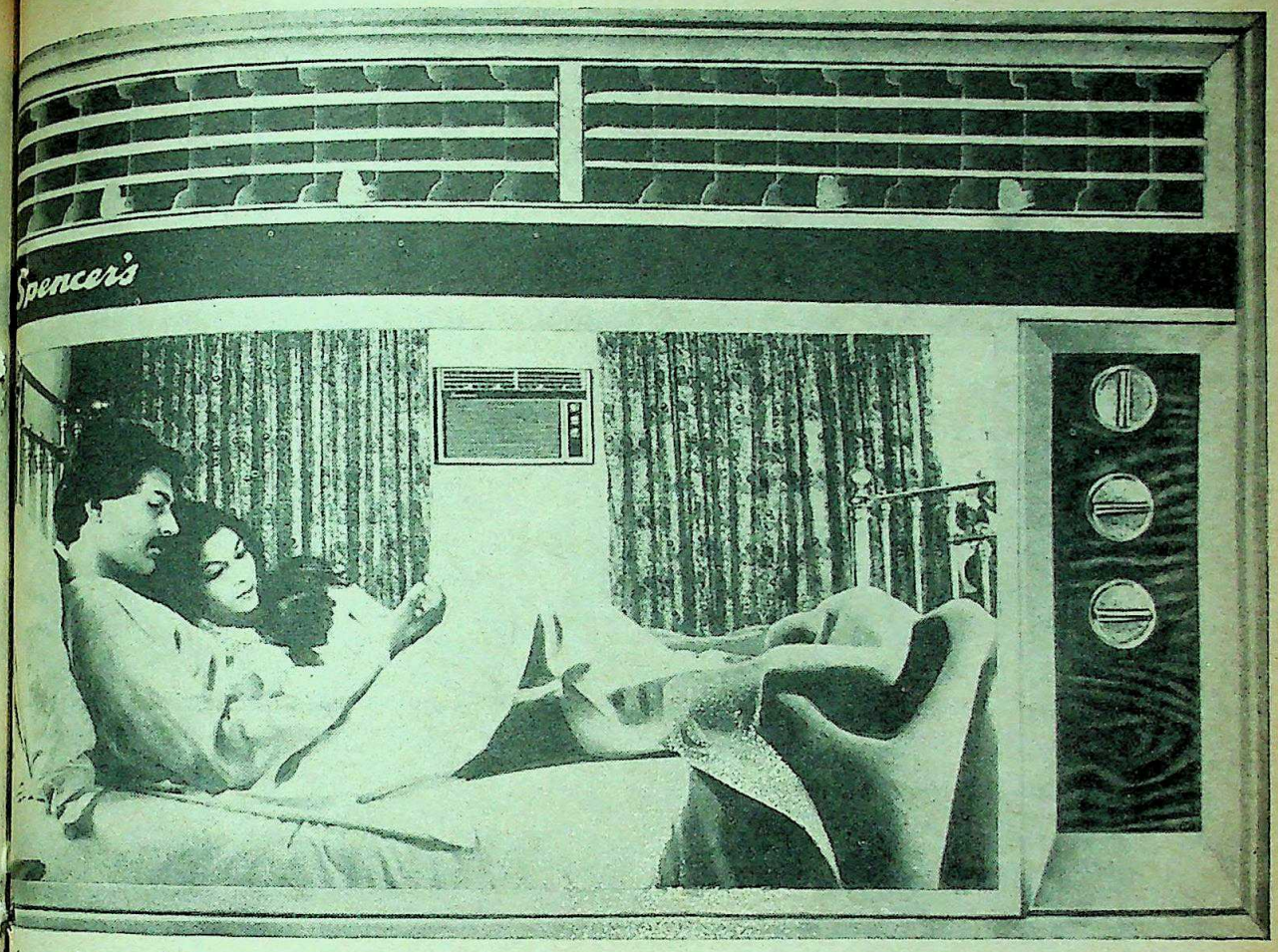

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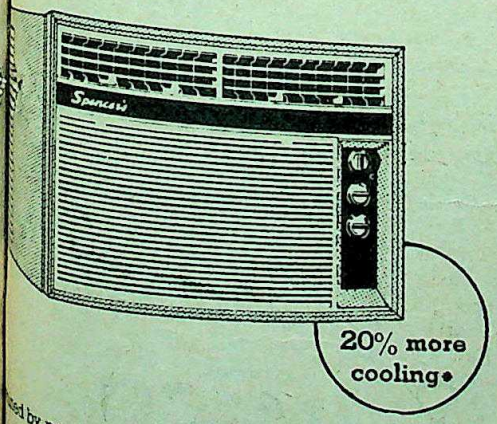

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POLLUTION

Poison On Tap

SREEKANT KHANDEKAR

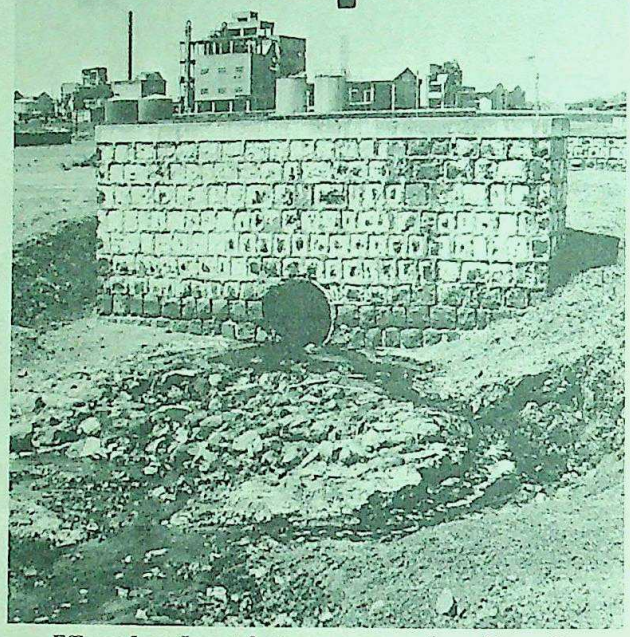
IN THE headlong march towards 'progress', nations seldom pay any attention to the concomitant evil of industrial pollution. India is certainly no exception. The district headquarters of Ratlam (population: 160,000) in north-west Madhya Pradesh provides a classic example of misplaced priorities. Two industrial units—Ratlam Alcohol and Jayant Vitamins—have been discharging on an average 480,000 litres of organic and 100,000 litres of inorganic effluent everyday into the nearby Kurel river. Years of litigation have failed to convince the industries—one of which, Ratlam Alcohol, is a state government undertaking—to remedy the situation.

Ratlam's pollution problem originated several decades ago, as soon as one of the two industries came into existence in the early '60s. As a divisional office for Western Railway, the city has accommodation facilities on its outskirts for an estimated 20,000 railway staff and their families. It is also the water filling point for trains plying the Delhi-Bombay route. Additionally, about 7,000 people either board, disembark or pass through Ratlam daily. The total water requirement for the railways alone is in the region of seven million litres a day, half of which is required for drinking purposes.

In the'60s, the railway authorities had decided to tap the neighbouring Kurel river, in order to meet their water requirements. Land was acquired and a dam constructed on the Kurel—at a point about 12 km from Ratlam. A pumping station and a filtration plant were installed and the entire work was completed in 1960 at a cost of Rs 35 lakh.

Worsening Problem: But for the railways, it was virtually an exercise in futility. Ratlam Alcohol came into being in 1963 and production started soon after. As the years went by, the pollution problem only grew worse. In the mid-seventies Jayant Vitamins started production and in the same period two other smaller units—Shasmi and Sajjan Chemicals—started discharging their effluent into the Kurel.

At first sight Jayant Vitamins and Ratlam Alcohol, guilty of the same lack of concern, present largely different pictures. Outside Jayant Vitamins (turnover: Rs 4.5 crore, number of employees: 350) flows a dark and thin stream of effluent which attracts little notice but flows quietly down a canal which joins the Kurel five kilometres upstream from the railway barrage.



Effluent from Jayant factory: preoccupation with profits

On the other hand Ratlam Alcohol presents a picture which, in the words of a local resident "would drive the devil himself back to hell". The reddish brown effluent is released into a 40-acre field adjoining the factory to dry creating an unforgettable stink.

Through most of the year, the problem is checked by bunds that have been created to hold back the stream of effluent. The railways have installed pumps at these points to disperse the liquid on the adjoining land. But when the rains come—Ratlam receives on an average 40 inches annually—this arrangment promptly collapses and the effluent gushes towards the railway barrage. The alcohol plant's system of drying also comes to nought and the foul liquid cannot be held back.

The level of pollution is so high that even after filtration, according to a health inspector's report, for three to four months of the year, the water is unfit for human consumption. Fumes a railway divisional engineer: "We have had this nuisance for so long. Can't anyone do anything about it?" The plant managements remain indifferent.

Delay: The railways took the four units to court in 1977. In January 1978 the district court's judgment went in favour of the railways. But the case was taken to the High Court which granted a stay. The case is still pending four years later. The Central Board for Prevention and Control of Water Pollution also took the issue to court but nothing came of that either.

While the railway employees and their families are paying the price for industry's indifference, they are nevertheless an organised body and at least have access to sources of water, however inadequate that may be. The people of Chhoto Jarwasa have been entirely forgotten. The docile residents of the village alongside which the effluent flows on its way to the Kurel. They cannot afford to go to the courts, and their legitimate grievances have never been heard. They have learnt to simply live with the problem.

Chhoto Jarwasa, situated seven km from Ratlam, is a small village. It has some 175 houses and a population of 750. According to Shankar Lal, a tall, young man, a group of villagers had been to see the collector and had later gone to the alcohol plant some years ago to complain about the pollution but to little visible effect. Ram Narayan Bhuwanji, a shrewd but energetic resident who is also a member of the panchayat: "Once, a long time ago, we used to get clear water in this stream. Now we don't and an open well, 200 yards away provides us dirty coloured water. We have lost some heads of cattle too because of the dirty water." It has not occurred to the villagers to demand compensation.

Unchahera's Plight: The worst affected of the entire lot is certainly Unchahera which, as its name suggests, is perched on a hill. Unchahera is a two km walk from the railway barrage, upstream along the Kurel. The river forms a loop at this point and encircles Unchahera and when it rains the village is totally cut off for days on end. The tube-well some distance away becomes inaccessible. Says Dhanmal Lal: "We primarily depend on catching rain water in vessels before it reaches the ground. We do not drink from the river at that time."

The factories have been getting away scot free although the Water (Prevention and Control) Act, 1974 clearly states: "No person shall... permit any poisonous, noxious or polluting matter determined in accordance with standards laid down by the Board to enter... into any stream or well. And the discharge of none of the factories conforms to the standards stipulated.

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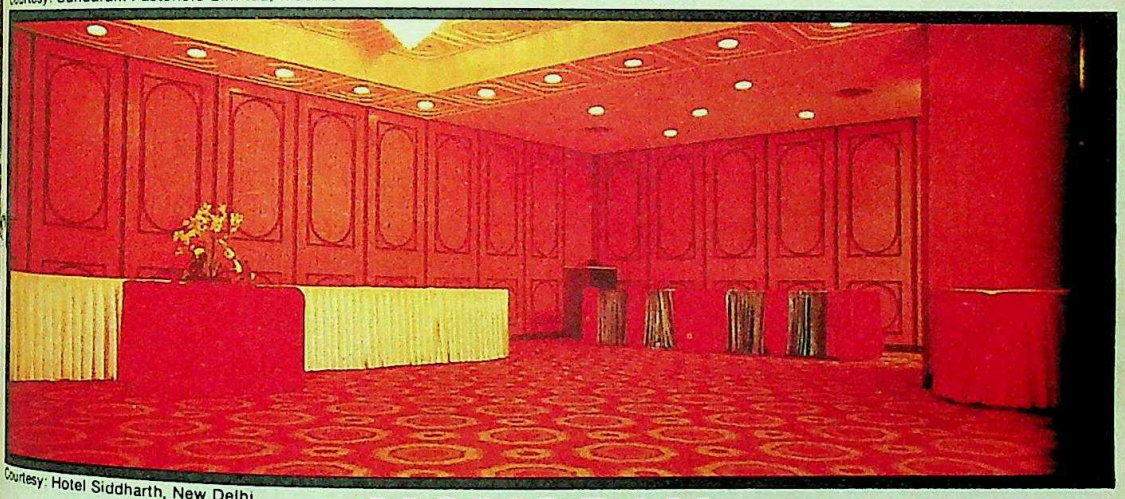

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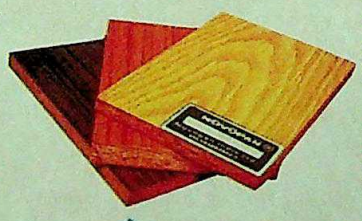

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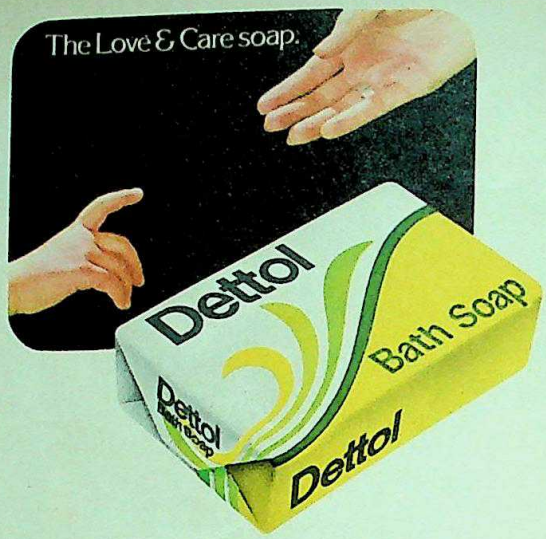

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Kanungo, manager of Ratlam ch employs 175 men, states one another to explain why 19 years without any concrete progress. ent treatment consists of two robic lagoons first break down organic pollutants and later ment further reduces organic ew, after 19 years, Ratlam ally going in for anaerobic cost: a paltry Rs 3.80 lakh. But an expert's report this first self inadequate as "the quality fluent will not be suitable for land or in inland water".

Effort: R.P. Sinha, factory ayant Vitamins cites the closure for nine months in 1980 as a for delay and says that work is ress for a Rs 18 lakh effluent heme.

Vitamins has also been accused joint scheme for treatment for s which pooled money to ap- ay firm, Candy Filters, to study in mid-1977. It took two years lters to submit its final report at ich Jayant Vitamins walked out gement after raising objections ints. The whole plan collapsed ck to square one. In effect, two had been bought for a mere Rs h was the fee paid to Candy pare the report.

onmentalist in Bhopal summed tion ruefully: "Until environ- keeping becomes accepted, you bye to a pollution-free society."

—SREEKANT KHANDEKAR in Ratlam

kness Noon

E time of its inauguration in 1969 Rs 131-crore Guru Nanak Dev rmal Plant at Bhatinda in Pun- ed as a giant stride in the state's —and no doubt it was. How- a's 1.25 lakh citizens have at while progress is always pain- g colours, in practice it often rld a dull, grimy grey. Today the der a permanent blanket of ash coats every surface and a breath is likely to wind up a gh.

gh the 440-megawatt capacity rn 5,000 tonnes of coal daily in s, due to continuous mainten- ons the usual consumption is 00 tonnes in two or three units. ent of the coal is around 40 per cent which means 1,200 tonnes of ash daily—or about 1 kg per citizen. The plant is fitted with electro-static precipitators (ESPS) to prevent ash from coming out of the chimneys along with the smoke but these broke down after six years of functioning.

Bhatinda's citizens responded by going on the offensive and forming an anti-pollution committee. Last month, the committee petitioned the then Governor. Aminuddin Khan and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, asking them to prod the plant management into replacing the precipitators.

Mass Action: G.S. Chowdhary, who is chairman of the anti-pollution committee, is already distributing handbills calling the public to a protest meeting next fortnight. The committee has been trying to tackle the problem from the top by lobbying ministers and government secretaries in Chandigarh, the state capital, for the past five months. The meeting marks a change in tactics.

Thermal plant authorities fight shy of admitting there is a pollution problem, maintaining that hardly any fly-ash is emitted or even if it is, it doesn't do any harm. While according to the plant's Superintendent Engineer (Operations) S.C. Mathur, "The fly-ash emitted is hardly 1 per cent of the total ash produced," the anti-pollution committee members quote a report of the Punjab Air Pollution Board which estimates the amount of fly-ash pouring out to be 20 to 30 per cent of the total ash produced.

The plant management is responding to the problem but in typically bureaucratic slow-motion. "We have started negotiations with Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) to get new ESPS," affirms Mathur but he declines to state how soon the devices could be bought and installed. "Government sanction, funds and time are needed," he says. However, another engineer admitted that the foot-dragging is due, not so much to the cost of the ESPS but to indirect costs—the power and revenue losses—of shutting down the plant in order to repair or replace the ESPS.

Costly Maintenance: While the four new precipitators will be expensive—an estimated Rs 10 crore—running the plant without them is not cheap either. Plant engineers say that without the ESPS the induced draft fans are in constant need of repair which costs about Rs 20,000 per fortnight.

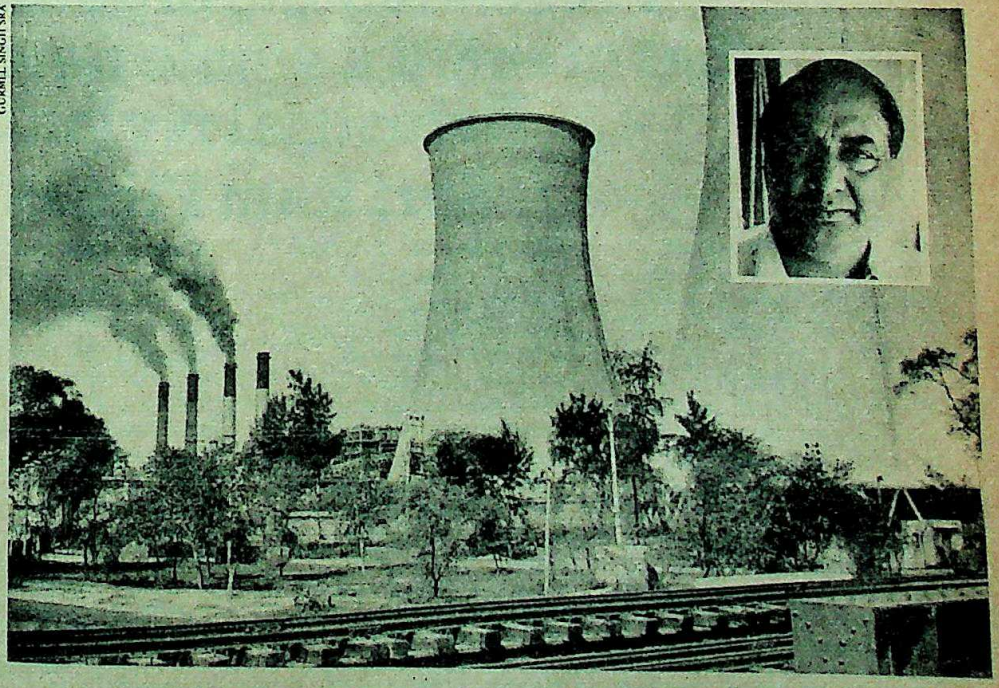
The ill effects of the high level of fly-ash pollution are becoming increasingly obvious. A Bhatinda physician, Dr Nirmal Kumar Singla, secretary of the Punjab Medical Association, notes a steady increase in nasal, eye and respiratory complaints from his patients over the last several years. An agriculture department officer in Bhatinda points out that the ash-laden air damages crops. In varying degrees, depending on proximity to the plant, several thousand acres are affected by pollution, he says. But what most people complain of is simply the ever-present pall of soot.

Ironically, Bhatinda gets only the nasty side-effects from the plant and none of the electricity generated. The power is first transmitted to Ludhiana, an industrial centre, and then distributed over the Punjab Electricity Boards' grid system. In the eyes of Bhatinda's citizens the plant has turned out to be, quite literally, a dirty trick.

—GURMEL SINGH SRA in Bhatinda

Bhatinda thermal plant and G.S. Chowdhary (inset): dirty trick

GURMEL SINGH SRA



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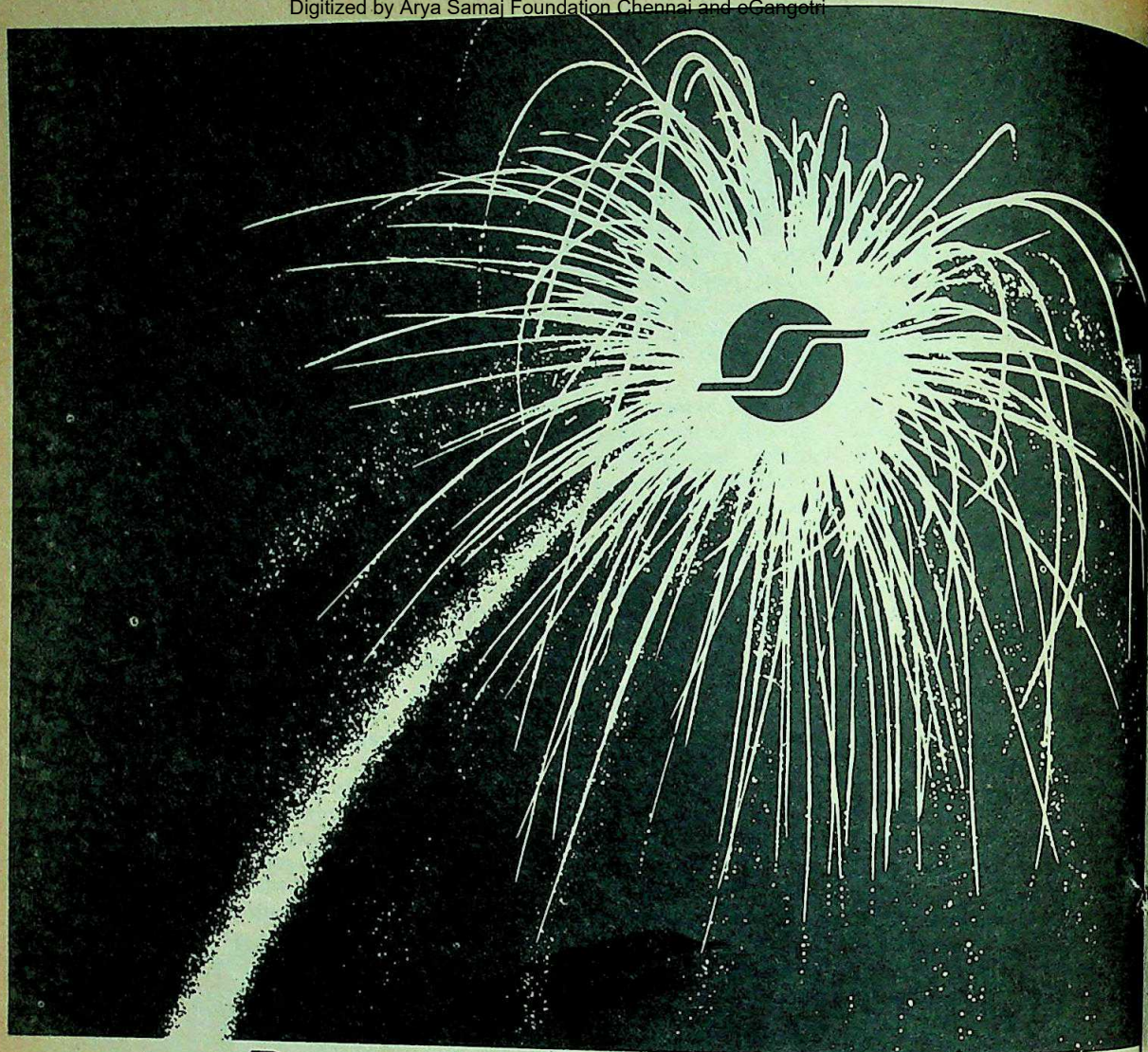

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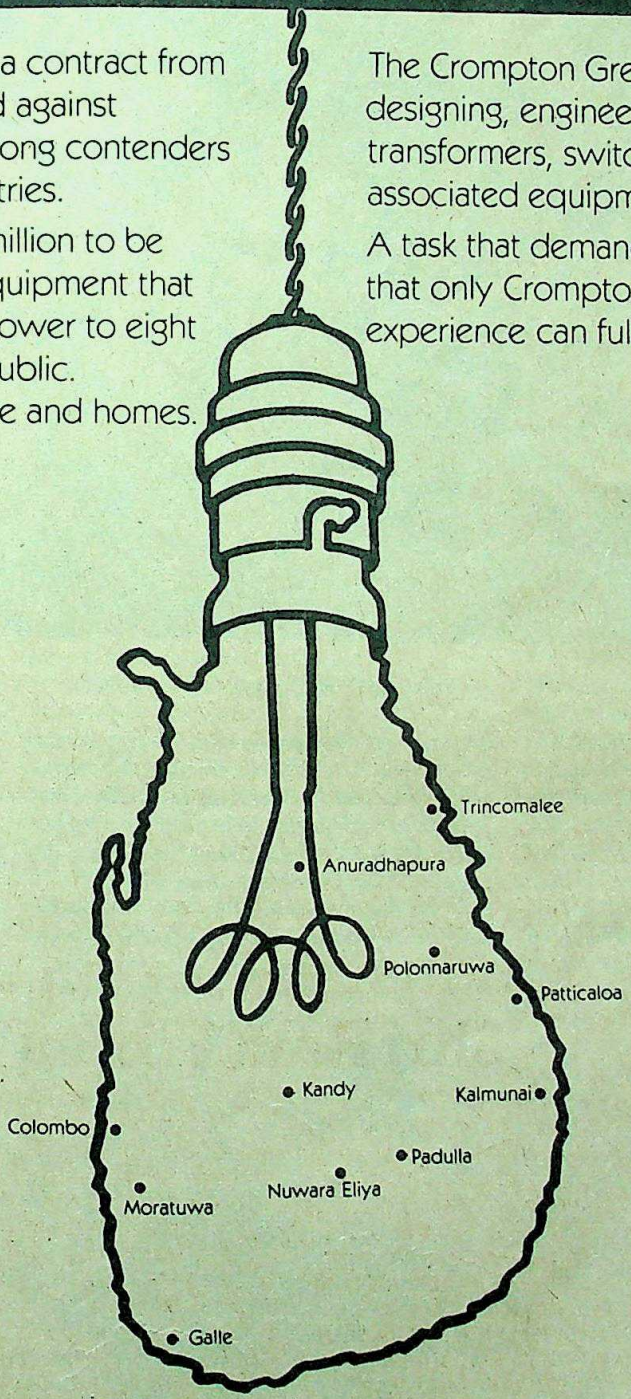

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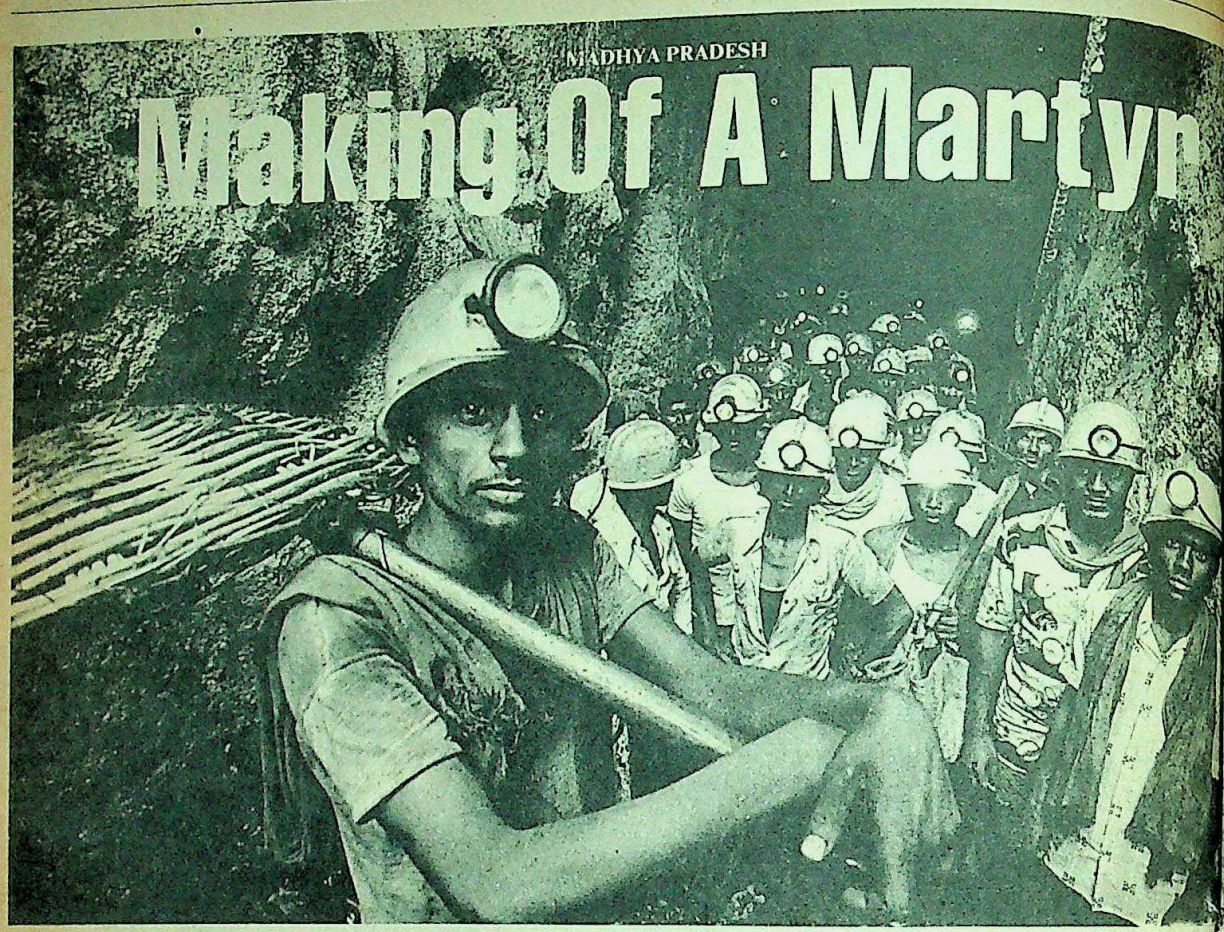
MADHYA PRADESH

Making Of A Martyr



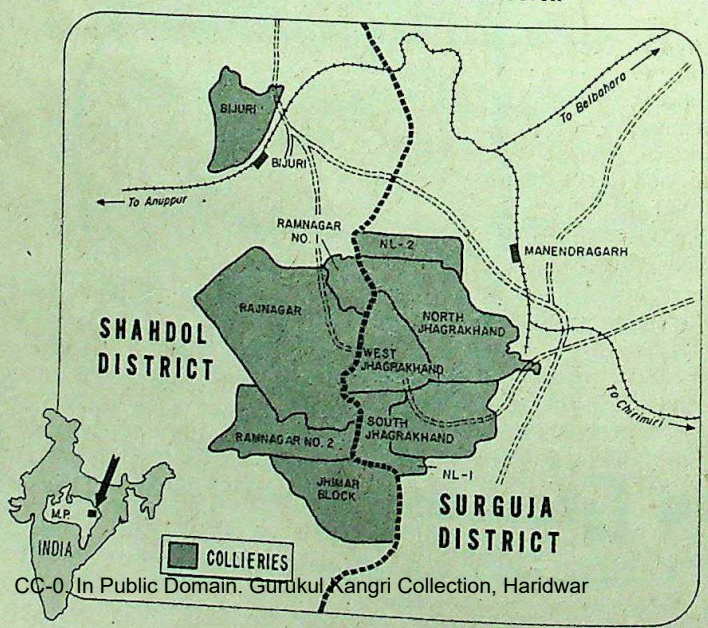
Miners at the Jhagrakhand coalfields

WHILE it lasted, last fortnight's nine-hour hostage hold-up in Congress(I) Member of Parliament Dalbir Singh's Delhi apartment generated wild images of urban terrorism on the loose. It was the first time ever that the problems of distant, rural India had been so dramatised and Ram Narayan Kumar, the improbable attacker, appeared to signal a new and violent trend of bringing such problems to the cites. By the time the drama ended, however, there was only a multitude of question marks hanging over the motive for the bizarre incident and Kumar showed through as a charlatan and an opportunist, an eccentric and emotional individual who had cleverly used the allegedly "inhuman" plight of coal miners in the Jhagrakhand coalfields in Madhya Pradesh to publicise the main issue—himself.

There were other elements of parody—the manner in which Dalbir Singh, the prime target of Kumar and his accomplice Kumaraswamy, made his inglorious escape via bathroom and rear fire-escape, the attackers' descent from belligerence into geniality and finally contemplations of suicide, and their five frightened hostages' testimonials later on to Kumar's "basic decency and sincerity".

No blood was spilt on that thoroughfare of politicians' homes—South Avenue—that anticlimactic afternoon Kumar and Kumaraswamy were at 4 p.m. by policemen posing as ists—Kumar himself had gained posing as one—all that was le .38 Smith and Wesson revolver, th stirring written statements about th conditions, and broad hints fr Government about Kumar's "forc kers" and the inevitable theory of some conspiracy.

Violent Views: Sli and suave, Kumar, looks a fire-breathing tionary. But in a rec written pamphlet titl lence is a historical he sets forth the Leninist view that "N student of history will certain historical s render violence ine He goes on to declare "We intend to execu tial individuals who used their official po power to commit he crimes—crimes whi matter of public know revulsion and which



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effective moral standards, ce be rewarded by a death ublic lynching."

ment, it looked as though be harbinger of India's own aly's Red Brigades or West Baader Meinhoff—fanatical ling the urban elite to ransom m through their own pre- ocial change.

ought to reinforce his picture d's 20,000 miners' cruel de- claiming that 60 per cent of m diseases like cancer, tuber- chitis and leprosy; that drink- unavailable in pure form; that ines were so inadequate that miners died in their hundreds; nsportation to and from the ted mines was non-existent.

Conditions: The situation, as scovered on a tour of the 300 area, is certainly better than in d-Jharia coalfields in Bihar, squalor and corruption have of the miners' everyday misery. or was Kumar's target Dalbir the truth when he protested d nothing to do with the mines, as they did not fall nstituency. The Jhagrakhand divided into 15 mines; 10 of hin Dalbir Singh's Shahdol the other five in adjoining ct. Dalbir Singh has been in- alfield politics, although per- has often visited the mines.

mar has never been involved Jhagrakhand workers or with unions there. He visited the wice—on February 11 and 12 ch 19 and 20. His first visit after a strike notice was issued ja Coal Workers' Union ated to the All India Trade gress (AITUC), and the Madhya a Mazdoor Sabha (MPKMS), e Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS). withdrew its strike notice on after talks with the manage- MPKMS renewed its strike call and put out a charter of 62 With his glib articulations and his ndi, English, Tamil, Sanskrit er tongue, Telugu, Kumar ea- ed MPKMS leaders that he could protest strategy. He drafted a ing the 62 demands—and coo- his own name, describing himself r and journalist", after that of ad Shastri, the union's pre- efore the names of Nathu Lal general secretary, and Madhu , the vice-president.

ong strike did take place from

PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

Kumar with revolver, snapped during the hostages' crisis

April 2, and the terms of settlement between the MPKMS and the management on April 8 are couched in vague officialese. The only highlight was some violence in the Bijuri mine, and a fast by professional hunger-striker Nandlal Gautam, a burly, hyperbolic individual. Moreover, most of the 62 demands related to past agreements and their alleged non-implementation.

Improvement: Jhagrakhand's miners have experienced considerable improvement in their standards of living since nationalisation in 1972. But there are still many problems that need to be solved, and they relate chiefly to the miners' living conditions. Clearly, therefore, Kumar seized upon this not-too-grave situation and decided to capitalise on it.

Ratanlal Malaviya, 75, the founder-president of the Madhya Pradesh Colliery Workers' Federation (MPCWF), which is affiliated to the Congress(I)'s labour wing, the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), charges Kumar and his friends in the MPKMS with "exaggeration and self-agrandisement". This is echoed by mine officials, who are eager to point out every little measure they have taken—measures that have still to bridge the gap between ideal plans for the miners and the reality today. "We cannot do everything overnight," says R.P. Tiwari, deputy general manager of the coalfields, which fall under the jurisdiction of the Western Coalfields Limited (WCL).

MPKMS leaders are anxious to emphasise that Kumar is not a union leader, has never worked among the workers, and did not have their sanction for his New Delhi adventure. But Kumar's roots, a tangled mass of loose idealism, and his links with the MPKMS president Shastri, indicate that his action was not entirely spontaneous. By vastly exaggerating the miners' problems, Kumar may actually have damaged their cause. One cynical observer in Jhagrakhand even thinks that the hostage episode may very well have been pre-arranged between Dalbir Singh and Kumar. Both have obtained nation-wide attention, and been lifted from anonymity into prototypes of the lucky victim and the terrorist with the golden heart.

ONLY 5 feet 2 inches tall, Kumar did his schooling at Hardwar and Ayodhya, where his father Iyenger Swamy, also known as Ram Prem, ran an ashram. An 'ascetic' who knew how to garner a following, Ram Prem nevertheless fathered four children and had enough means to set his family up comfortably before he died in 1973.

Kumar dropped out of studies at the Maharani Laxmibai College in Gwalior in 1974, and planned to shift his father's ashram to Delhi, where he bought a plot of land. It was after his father's death that Kumar came close to one of Ram Prem's disciples, an Austrian called George Sebeirer, who had settled in the ashram since 1963. Sebeirer and Kumar started a magazine called *Rightist Action Movement* (RAM), which fizzled out after three issues.

Sebeirer returned to Austria in 1975, and Kumar followed him there just before the Emergency, taking in Kabul, Istanbul, Paris and Venice en route before joining Sebeirer in Vienna. There, the two organised protest rallies against the Emergency that attracted the Government of India's attention. When he returned to India, Kumar was arrested by the Gwalior police and interned until after the 1977 elections.

Activism: The Janata government restored Kumar's impounded passport, enabling him to visit Vienna again. By then, Kumar had begun to benefit from his friendship with Shastri, who was Janata MP from Rewa. Back from Vienna, Kumar helped Shastri gather support for his private bill proposing to include the right to work in the fundamental rights chapter of the Constitution. Recalls Shastri: "Kumar seemed to be influenced by the speeches of Jayaprakash Narayan." A diehard Socialist,

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PICTURES BY RAGHU RAI

Blind union leader Shastri and (right) Pandey and miner with Tiwari (extreme right): upstaged by an imposter

Shastri says Kumar organised meetings, seminars, and a march on foot from Gwalior to Delhi to support the bill.

In 1979, Kumar started a magazine called *Muktighosh* with the help of Meera Srivastav, an elderly disciple of his father's, who also worked as a warden at the Aurobindo Ashram in Delhi. Sebeirer returned to India in 1977—he had visited the country clandestinely during the Emergency—and married Kumar's sister.

As editor of *Muktighosh*, Kumar toured Madhya Pradesh extensively and heard about Jhagrakhand from Shastri, who had organised two long strikes in the coalfields in 1968 and 1972. An Indian called Adhesh Kumar, a resident of Austria, helped Kumar buy a revolver in Saharanpur in 1980. The same year, Kumar became very friendly with an associate professor of economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in Delhi, called Satish Kumar Jain, and formed a body called the Samata Sanghatan. The Lohia Vichar Manch, a Socialist think-tank, also helped Kumar in his pursuits.

Bank Accounts: Last year, Kumar purchased an Ambassador car for Rs 70,000. Recently, his bank accounts show two large cash payments, one for Rs 40,000 and one for Rs 60,000. Kumar claims that he has earned money by writing for foreign journals, royalty from a book he and Sebeirer co-authored, and a film on the right to work for which he wrote the script.

But he has strange benefactors, not all of whom have been traced by the police. One is a professor of mathematics at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research in Bombay, who regularly sends Kumar Rs 1,000 a month. Police officials from Delhi have gone to Shillong, where the mathematician currently stays, in order to check his antecedents. Currently, says Kumar, he is half-way through a book written jointly with Sebeirer and titled 'Dialogue On Revolutionary Ethics'.

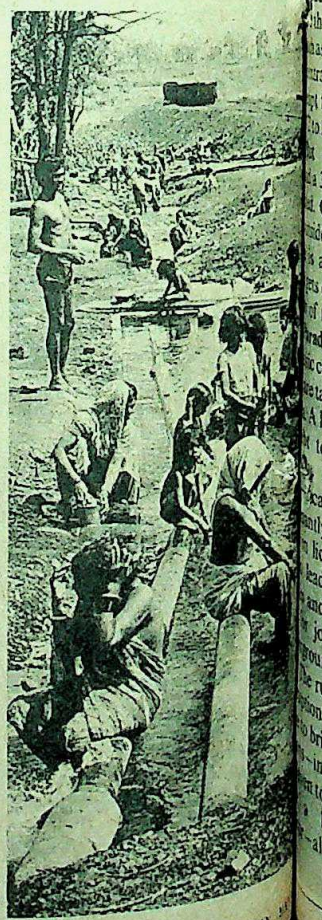
Although Kumar was staying with Jain at the JNU campus, his mother lives in a rented house that contains, apart from Srivastav and Kumar's younger brother Gopal, the younger participant in the hostage episode, Kumaraswamy, and his father Swami Jyotir Tirtha. Gopal, who is also currently under arrest—Jain obtained anticipatory bail on April 23—is an M.Sc. student at Hindu College, and, apart from taking expensive flying lessons, helped Kumar and Srivastav in preparing pamphlets that propagated Kumar's philosophy of violence.

Commanding Obedience: Both Gopal and Srivastav, when asked who is really behind Kumar, say that he is not the sort of man to listen to anybody, but a "born leader" who commands obedience best illustrated by Kumaraswamy's blind and awe-struck veneration.

What precisely drove Kumar to his April 14 action remains a mystery. Allegations are rife in the coalfields that Kumar drove all the way there in his car in March and toured the area with Shastri to exhort workers to strike. Mine officials also charge that Kumar flaunted a briefcase bulging with cash and promised workers monetary aid in case they had to go on prolonged strike.

Police sources say that Kumar had assured Shastri of "alternative methods" if the strike failed. As it happened, Shastri was in Delhi on the day Kumar invad Singh's flat; but he says he had that Kumar would do such a "f drastic thing", and insists that he on his way to Chandigarh to atte convention of the Janata, the Co

Community bathing at the co



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AKHAND

assic aradox

THE JHAGRAKHAND coalfields situated 125 km east of Shahdol in Madhya Pradesh, were national- 1972, and the miners' conditions hen have gradually improv- over those that existed under pri- ownership. The miners' biggest wages came in 1979 when the Coal Wage Awards II set out formulae that are due to be in January next year by the Joint Committee for the Coal which has representatives from miners' unions and the ment.

ainst an average man-shift wage before nationalisation, today's man-shift costs Western ds Limited (WCL) which adminis- Jhagrakhand collieries, Rs 55.50. imum basic wage for the lowest rker stands today at Rs 512 per Average salaries hover around 1,500 mark, and many piece-rated ders, who shovel mined coal into that trundle it to the surface, earn as Rs 3,000 a month if they put in tra work. Production in the mines from 70,000 tonnes per month to 2.5 lakh tonnes per month now. the coalfields are sprawled a 300 sq km area that is hilly and Getting to Jhagrakhand from ide world is difficult—the easiest a desultory train service that dislocated and is subject to the of travellers.

radoxes: The miners' lives are full contradictions—the majority of tax payers, and yet live in rough A large number of the miners are to moneylenders who charge interest rates of 25 per cause the miners, who are pre- ntly tribal, squander their earn- liquor and gambling. Yet, as a leader says: "Hundreds of gra- and post-graduates queue up to jobs. Everybody wants to go ground."

The rush has also led to unchecked ption. Miners complain that they to bribe the management—and the —in order to get things done to obtain employment. There is a lot of illegal contractual —although mine officials claim that contractual labourers are not permitted in most of the underground jobs.

Officially, the mines' rosters show a total employee strength of 12,470 miners, and only 2,656 of these have been provided with housing—a small improvement on pre-nationalisation days, when there were 1,150 houses for 7,362 workers. As a result, most miners live in squalid colonies of *kuccha* huts, and have to contend with dirty, overflowing gutters running between their houses. Sanitation and toilet facilities are deplorable, and as many as 30 families often share one bathroom.

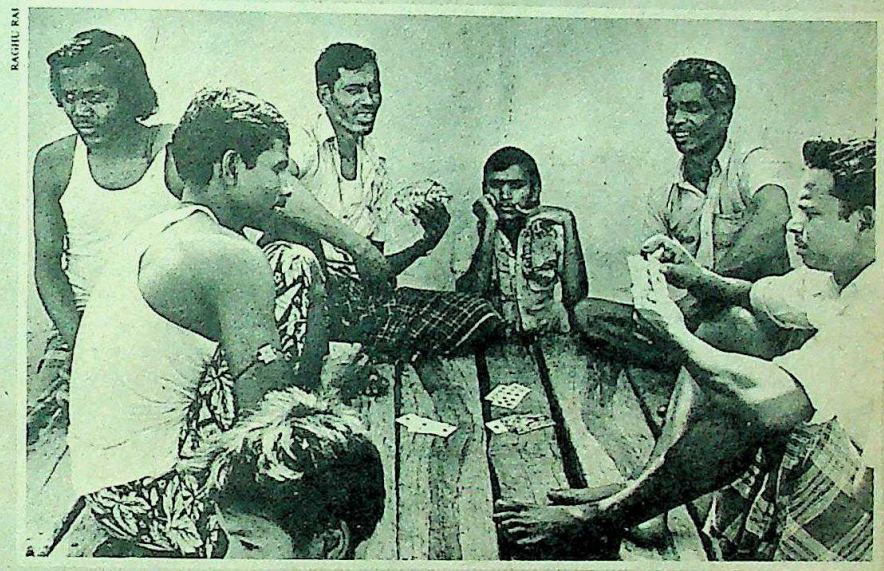
Inadequate Care: These unhygienic conditions are exacerbated by inadequate medical facilities. Miners claim that only three of the 10 dispensaries in the area are actually working. Serious complaints are referred to the Central Hospital in Manendragarh, the railhead, which is popularly known as *maut ka adda* (death chamber). The hospital acquired its first specialist in three years in early April when Dr P.C. Naik, a young surgeon, took over as superintendent.

Naik contradicts Ram Narayan Kumar's grisly picture of miners dying in their hundreds. "Only 192 tuberculosis patients were admitted here last year," he says. But Naik and his colleague Dr A.K. Sen claim that they have to requisition medicines at least six months in advance. Adds Naik: "It is true that occupancy in the hospital averages only 50 per cent." This because most miners prefer to travel to far-off hospitals where they get better treatment—and have to pay for it.

Leaders of the Madhya Pradesh Koyla Mazdoor Sabha (MPKMS) which led the April strike, claim that miners have to trek or cycle long distances every day to get to their places of work. Matters are worsened because 14 of the 15 mines are "incline" digs where miners have to walk three or four kilometres in order to reach the coal-seam from the mine's mouth.

National Attention: Water supply, too, is sporadic and polluted. Mining officials say the six filter plants are in operation, but the miners report that their drinking water is often clouded with deadly coal dust. Investigation also shows that illegal or benami employment is one of the biggest rackets in the coalfields, and proves lucrative for both management and union officials.

RAGHU RAI



Miners gambling their earnings away: easy come, easy go

Significantly, the president of the pro-Congress(I) union, the Madhya Pradesh Colliery Workers' Federation (MPCWF), Ratanlal Malaviya, prepared a lengthy memorandum for Union Energy Minister A.B.A. Ghani Khan Chaudhary because he heard that Chaudhary might visit the mines in the aftermath of the Delhi siege. The memorandum lists inadequate medical facilities, poor drinking-water supply, woeful communications between the mines, and the perennially haphazard railway link to Anuppur junction, 40 km east of Shahdol, on the South-Eastern Railway.

Ultimately, most of these instances of exploitation, avarice, and indifference are not peculiar to Jhagrakhand. Manendragarh and Jhagrakhand are only only two more dots on India's coal-mining map. Thanks to Kumar, however, they have achieved nationwide prominence. —CHAITANYA KALBAG

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Lok Dal.
and other leaders of the MPKMS
ey never advocated violence of
d. But the MPKMS itself is a
in a milieu where all coalfield
are characterised by corruption
ism. It contains elements of
ab and the Lok Dal—but the
n effectively sidelined by
nion's vice-president Tiwari is
ew, and a criminal lawyer in
h, the rail head for the mines.
PKMS activists complain that
also unfairly foisted general
hu Lal Pandey on the union.
n: Pandey is prone to hyper-
kin to Kumar's, and explains
sign of rebuttal of Kumar's
e facile theory that the mines'
scared by the publicity, em-
crash programme of improve-
miners' conditions. Pandey met
after the latter was rendered
in March 1975—Shastri had
ne eye in the Goa liberation
became his nurse, compan-
ciant.
mber 22, 1980, Shastri ab-
ced to Jhagrakhand miners
ppointing Pandey the general
e MPKMS, and gifting them with
his "eyes". Last year, Pandey visited Australia for a conference and allegedly returned laden with purchases.

It is true that the situation in the Jhagrakhand mines is ripe for union activism, and that the unions other than the MPKMS are content with being channels for many of the rackets that usually flourish in mining regions, and with collecting their monthly *chanda* (membership fees). The MPKMS has therefore been able to gather support with its agitational methods.

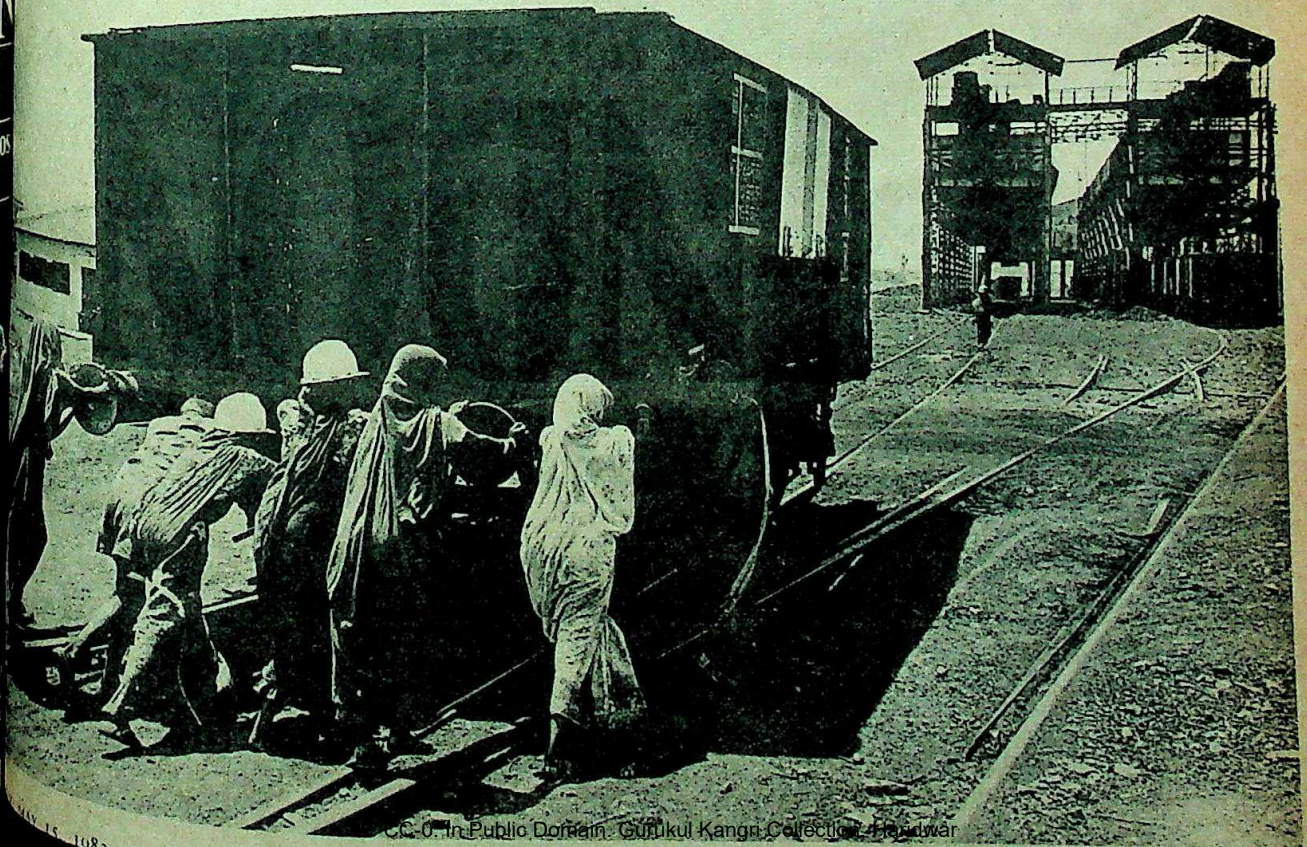
The Delhi siege did result in some action at Jhagrakhand. Water supply was improved and better purified, the Manendragarh Central Hospital for coal workers acquired a fresh coat of whitewash, and Union Minister of State for Energy in charge of coal Gargi Shankar Mishra was to inspect the mines. Mishra's expected visit, however, was preceded by a shake-up in the mines' management. Personnel Manager J.K. Ghosh, who was on transfer but had been asked to stay on pending a replacement, was abruptly asked to relinquish charge on April 21. The same evening, his deputy S.N. Prasad, who has worked in the same area since 1968 and has acquired a rather unpopular image, was peremptorily relieved of his charge via a wireless message, and asked to go on transfer to the Korba mines.

Instant Career: The biggest beneficiary of the entire affair, of course, will be Kumar, a rolling stone who has finally gathered the moss of instant notoriety. How meticulously he had planned his escapade is clear from telegrams that he and Pandey jointly sent to nine news organisations on March 20 from Jhagrakhand. The cables read in part: "Hundred thousand people living inhuman existence... indifference of media responsible for existing order." It may perhaps indicate Kumar's cleverness that, aside from Arun Shourie of the *Indian Express*, the other cables were all addressed to foreign media representatives—ranging from Associated Press and Reuters to BBC and the Voice of America.

Clearly, Kumar was more interested in a media build-up. Perhaps he is gambling on the chance that he will be hailed as a saviour of the Jhagrakhand miners when he eventually gets out of jail. So far, he has only gained free entry into the nation's hall of infamy. The most disturbing spin-off of Kumar's adventure could be that other disgruntled elements might choose to hit at the power structure in similar ways—and gatecrash into a political career and a ready-made villainy as quick and as ersatz as instant coffee.

—CHAITANYA KALBAG in Jhagrakhand

Women workers pushing a coal-laden railway wagon: exploitation



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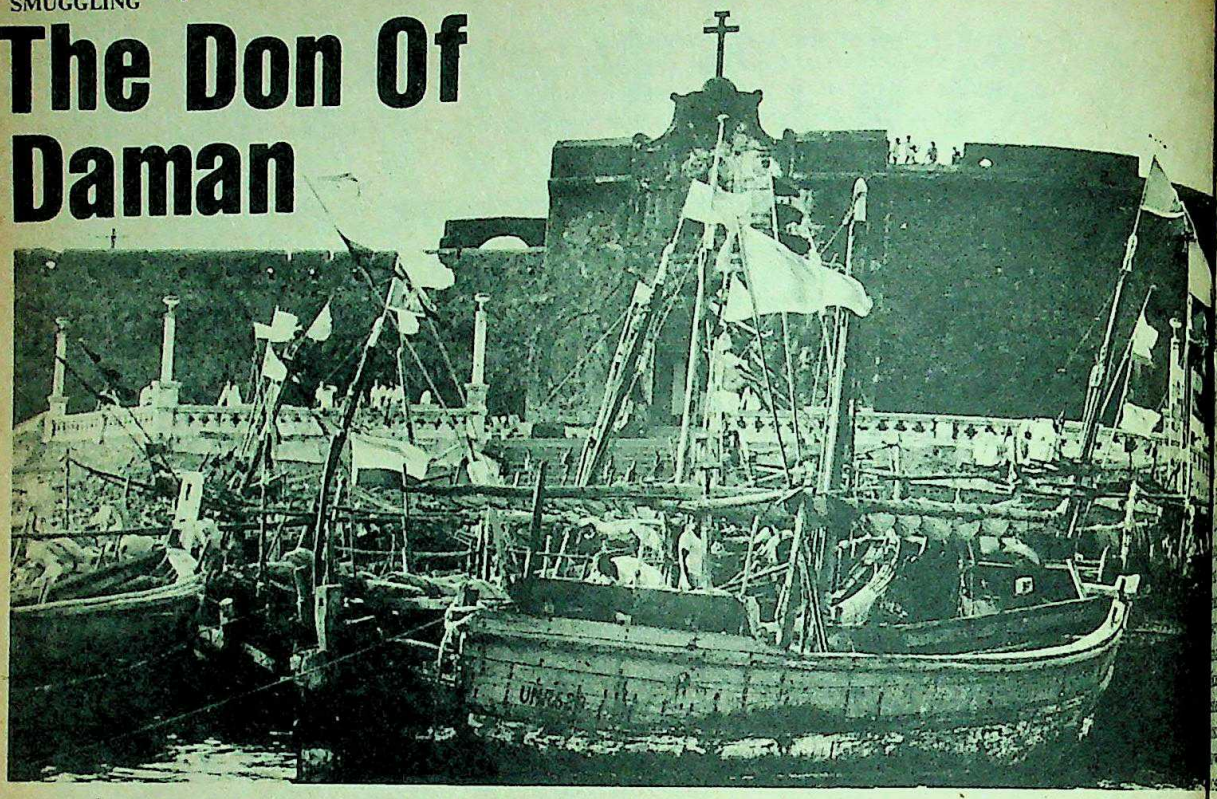
SMUGGLING

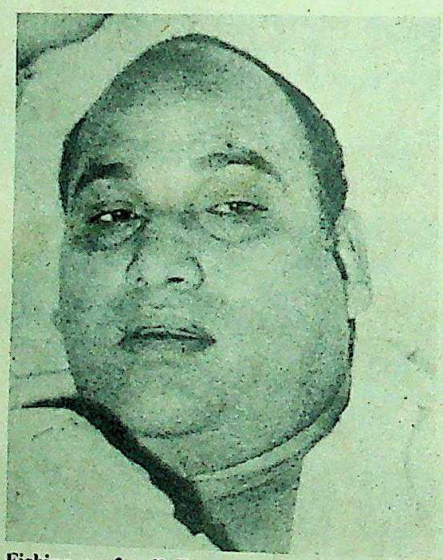
The Don Of Daman



TO THE 15,000 inhabitants of the Nani Daman coastline, he is simply known as Ganpati, or the God of fortune. To law enforcement officials, however, the name Ganpati has other, more significant connotations. It is the Indian equivalent of the Mafia 'Don' or Godfather. Which is why last fortnight's dramatic arrest of the man who bore that name, but is known on police files, and to the world at large, as Sukur Naran Bakhia, has created more shockwaves than any other in recent memory.

For two decades, Bakhia has thumbed his nose at police and customs agents who watched helplessly as his smuggling empire grew to unmatched proportions. For two decades, the 51-year-old underworld don has dumped immeasurable quantities of gold on the bullion markets of Bombay, Baroda and Ahmedabad. For two decades, the legend of Bakhia has grown larger than life and has been caricatured in scores of Bombay films.

Abrupt End: On April 8, the bubble burst and the continuing saga of the smuggler king came to an abrupt halt. The end, however, was hardly in keeping with the image. When customs sleuths, led by L.G. Fitter, 47, superintendent, customs, Daman, slid open the teak door leading to Bakhia's top floor bedroom in his opulent Daman mansion, they found the Don sprawled out on the bed, a glass of Peter Scot whisky in his hand.



Fishing craft off Daman (top) and Bakhia: haven for smugglers

The bald, stocky Bakhia, whose intelligence network can rival the best in the land, showed no surprise at the intrusion and only demanded to see the detention order. While the order was being read out to him (he is illiterate) he calmly poured himself another drink. Finally, he looked up at Fitter and said matter-of-factly: "This is the first time I will be going directly to jail." Fitter, knowing Bakhia's lavish life-style, could not control his curiosity, and asked him why he was drinking Indian whisky. Bak ed and quipped: "I don't tru ed Scotch. It's all adulterated days."

In retrospect, however, Bakh little to laugh about. Arrested Conservation of Foreign Exch Prevention of Smuggling Acti (COFEPOSA), Bakhia faces a sever tence if the smuggling charges ag are proved. And, in an underg dog-eat-dog contraband indus years out of circulation is fatal. A arrest has triggered off a slump in bullion market as well as the dom ket. Bakhia was reportedly the sin buyer of contraband gold in Dub slump was temporary since m regular buyers are still waiting to s Bakhia carries out his oft-repe that the jail that can hold him fo of time has still to be built.

Direct Links: Meanwhile, cu police officials in Goa, where he is in Fort Aguada prison, are pon bulky dossier in an attempt to bu strong enough to keep him behind long as they can. For the momen case they have which links him smuggling is the seizure of Chan vessel that was caught off the D last January with contraband crore on board.

Also on board was the one

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in the person of Vithal Govan
's son-in-law. Since January,
een on the run, managing to
ahead of the law. "There was
o run," says Fitter, "we had
all his known hideouts and
knew, he would have to return
man."

man was also where it had
mall, quiet village on the coast,
Daman has become an unoff-
chool for smugglers. A bare
Bombay, its 20-odd km of
iss-crossed with hundreds of
ver 400 fishing vessels, at least
powerful outboard motors,

Beginnings: Bakhia himself was
om Daman, the fourth son of a
ke virtually the entire popu-
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job was at the lowest rung of
d ladder—a carrier. Unlike
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Growth: Bakhia's
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Bakhia the fisherman's son,
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rmen, who virtually worshipped
r patron and also acted as a
for his smuggling operations at
also dispatched his brother-in-law, Naran Rama Tandel, to Dubai to oversee that side of the operations.

The changeover naturally led to a rift in the ranks and jealousies sprung up. The police got into the act and a crackdown on his gang led to the arrest of 20 associates in Daman. But Bakhia himself escaped the dragnet and by 1974 his network was re-established and organised better than before and his control over the coastline, unchallenged.

Spreading Tentacles: Once that was accomplished, Bakhia's tentacles spread outwards, to collaboration with syndicates in Singapore and Hong Kong. His rapid growth, however, led inevitably to gang wars with rival syndicates and in 1974 he was arrested under COFEPOSA and detained for over three years. But he was released reluctantly for lack of evidence and returned to his sprawling farmhouse in Daman to pick up the threads. At first, it appeared that he had lost his touch and a suicidal gamble in bulk purchase of silver at a time when silver prices plummeted set him back by an estimated Rs 40 crore. The Bakhia name was, however, enough to earn him massive amounts of credit in Dubai and he soon recovered.

But his inherent gambler's instinct was starting to boomerang badly. In April 1977, Bakhia refused to join the 80-odd smugglers who pledged to stop smuggling, secure in the knowledge that his political godfathers (one of them was Vallabhdas Tandel, a Congress(I) MLA from Goa) would ensure his security.

The gamble failed. On November 3, 1980, he was slapped with a COFEPOSA detention order, but his intelligence and his political patrons made sure he knew about the order in advance. In a clever move, Bakhia moved the Calcutta High Court for a stay order on the plea that he was a resident of the city engaged in honest business. He rented a house in Shakespeare Sarani and produced receipts before the court to prove his claim. Enforcement agencies tried to counter this claim by producing an income tax return showing that he owned an ice factory in Daman and had paid Rs 275 as income tax the same year. Finally, after a series of mysterious delays in the case, the court granted him a stay order and Bakhia returned to his full-time occupation. But his luck had evidently run out.

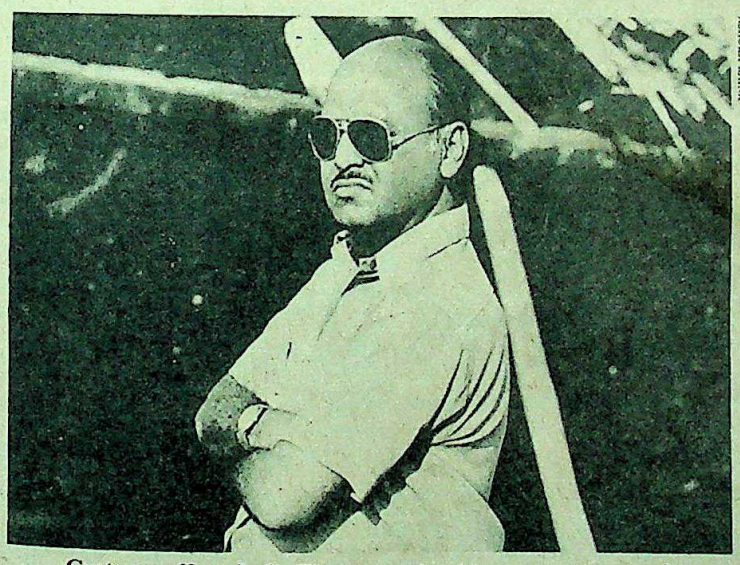
Fatal Mistake: Ironically, the key to his eventual capture lay in his newly-discovered fondness for virgins. Along with his ill-gotten wealth, Bakhia, according to the police, had started leading a life of debauchery, drinking and wenching. His fatal mistake was in picking up women from his own doorstep in Daman, preferably virgins. Enraged at this practice, the family members of one of the girls he had deflowered, informed on Bakhia and the result was the seizure of the contraband cargo and Bakhia's son-in-law.

Armed with the evidence customs sleuths set out to track Bakhia down. Even then, it took almost four months before they ran him to ground in his farmhouse in Daman, again thanks to an informer. It is obvious, say customs sources, that had Bakhia not interfered with the local women, he could have slipped in and out at will without anyone being the wiser. As it is, his arrival in Daman in the dead of the night was a close secret except for the informer's desire for revenge.

Knowing the effectiveness of Bakhia's intelligence network, the detention order was not issued locally but in Goa, and even that was only known to a handful of officers. When the customs party arrived at the massive steel gates, Bakhia's guards refused to open the door. There was no other way in since the entire five-acre estate was surrounded by 12-foot-high concrete walls topped with broken glass.

Finally, the customs men forced the gates open and Bakhia was taken to Goa under heavy guard. His new residence in Fort Aguada jail is a far cry from his marble-floored and teak-panelled farmhouse and there will be no more Peter Scot to drink or virgins to violate. But for how long is a question that even customs officials are reluctant to hazard a guess about.

—ASOKA RAINA in Daman



ASHOKA RAINA

Customs officer L.G. Fitter: running his quarry to ground

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MEDICAL COLLEGES

Terminally Sick

WHEN the Indian Medical Council (IMC) decided to de-recognise five medical colleges in Bihar from May 1, it came as no surprise to anyone. It was common knowledge that the five have no facilities worth the name and that malpractices of all kinds flourish unchecked.

But the IMC had for years chosen to turn a blind eye to these matters. And it was finally goaded into action only by the remarks of an Englishman, Professor J.E.M. Smith of the Post-graduate Medical School, Hammersmith, UK.

Scathing Observations: Smith made a number of scathing remarks about the quality of medical education in India and said that the IMC was more than partly responsible, since it had done nothing to check the rot. His opinion was that many M.S and M.D degree holders in India did not have even minimal knowledge of their subjects and were certainly not comparable to F.R.C.S and M.R.C.P degree holders.

But Smith singled out Bihar colleges for special condemnation, saying: "The worst offenders are those from Bihar where till today unfair means have been employed on a large scale, both inside and outside the examination halls. Further, most of the examiners in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh take bribes. These cold facts are widely known except to the authorities of the Indian Medical Council."

Smith's remarks provoked the IMC into swift action. It quickly sent a team on the facilities offered by the medi leges in Bihar. As a result of the tea five colleges were de-recognised. O institutions three—Nalanda College, Patna, Magadha Medical Gaya, Shrikrishna Medical Muzaffarpur—are private college were taken over by the Governmen Bhagalpur Medical College is state Government and Patalipu College, Dhanbad, was also take the Government in 1978.

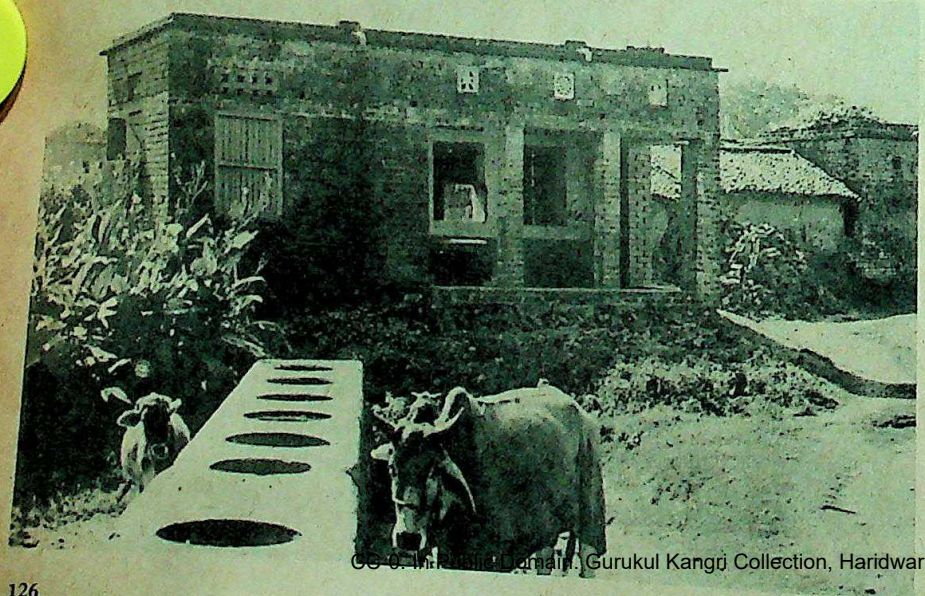
Even by Bihar's lax standard ditions in these colleges are outra the five colleges altogether 103 professor and associate professor Magadha Medical College has no except the principal. Patalipu Nalanda Medical Colleges do not professors in the gynaecology and cology departments. Says the Ste Services Association Joint Secreta Prasad Sinha: "The private colleg not have been allowed to grow. T neither adequate teaching facilities have affected the prestige of the leges in the state." Other doctors co many colleges do not have hos tached. Even Bhagalpur Medica somehow manages to function building of its own.

Futile Efforts: The mismana the private colleges prompted the ment to appoint a committee in 19 into the functioning of private colle the committee's report, the Go promulgated an ordinance ban opening of such colleges. It also cl five out of the nine private colleges the Government was not really improve the situation very much tions in the colleges were postp and time again. In 1977, after th the first Jagannath Mishra ministry of control was set up to oversee the ing of the colleges.

Much of the blame for the must fall upon the state Governm these colleges were set up th understanding that the Governm help them along by providing hospital facilities. This, in most never materialised. And its efforts the running of these colleges mostly ineffective.

In fact, the state is lucky that any recognised medical college situation in the other four medical not very different from what pre de-recognised colleges. Patna College (PMC), one of the oldest institutions in the country, has a

The deserted Anantpur Health Centre: deep-rooted malaise



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with de-recognition once in 1972. again facing trouble over alle- its examination results were . The degree course of Medical College is not recog- British Medical Council.

State: Kamla Achari, the first al of PMC, who survived a mur- k on her life recently, says that ok over, the college was in a ds: "The anatomy classes were er a year, the pathology depart- modern equipment or space. The microbiology department was being run in one room."

PMC has had the distinction of having eight principals on an ad hoc basis in the short span of a year. One of the doctors, Gopal Prasad Sinha, says that doctors frequently have to bear the expenses of research.

Many doctors and students place the blame squarely on the present Government. It is said that under Health Minister Umeshwar Prasad Verma, the working of the ministry has virtually stalled in the past one year. To what extent this is true is not certain but IMC Vice-president B. Mukhopadhyaya says that state authorities have not even bothered to reply to the letter communicating the IMC decision to de-recognise the colleges.

Now, however, the de-recognition may bring the students out into the streets. Then, of course, the Government would be forced to respond and do something to solve the problem. But at the moment it looks as if medical degrees awarded in Bihar will be nothing more than worthless scraps of paper.

—FARZAND AHMED

PALAS

sted Effort

AMBITIOUS project conceived by an Indian couple settled in the US and executed with the s of the Orissa Government has given the 'wind up' order by the . The brainchild of biochemist Choppala, 40, and his wife Lily, the crore medical institute to be set up baneswar was expected to be mod- along the lines of the Christian l College and Hospital in Vellore. h the exact reasons for the closure ot stated, the Centre's action has ly left the Choppalas flustered and e Government embarrassed.

The Centre's terse fiat may have been on a number of factors. As soon as of the mammoth project became to the public, both the state and Central governments are reported to have received a host of complaints against the promoters. A letter from an Oriya settled in the US which appeared in the *Samaj*—a leading Oriya daily—stated that the Choppalas were unknown in America and had neither background nor the ability to start and sustain such a huge project. The motives of the Choppalas became more suspect when they failed to take the local people and doctors into confidence. And finally, when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's opposition to private professional colleges based on capitation fees became known, the new venture's fate was sealed.

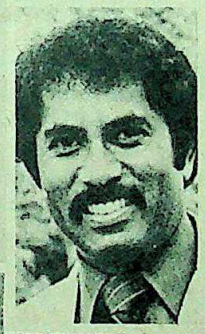
Denial: The Choppalas, who have reportedly spent over Rs 15 lakh on the project, hotly deny the allegations levelled against them. In fact the couple appear bent on salvaging the project. Says Choppala: "We have been trying to see the chief minister for the last seven months to sit down and make changes in the board, by-laws, fee structure, or even changes in the management pattern. But we haven't succeeded so far." Added Lily Choppala: "We still don't know the exact reasons behind the sudden closure. We hear that we are CIA agents and this is absurd."

The couple's plan to set up a medical institute in Orissa was motivated by the relative backwardness of the state. A red carpet welcome was laid out for the project when Choppala met Chief Minister J.B. Patnaik in November 1980. Soon after, Choppala went back to the US and set up an organisation called 'The Society of Indians in the US for the Advancement of Medical Education in India', in order to garner financial support for the project. A written proposal sent to the state Government in January '81 met with the reply: "The state Government has no objection to the establishment of a medical institute consisting of a medical college and an ultra-modern hospital."

By the time the Centre's axe fell, the Choppalas had enrolled 50 students, mostly from the US, and hired 25 staff to conduct classes at a drug control complex. The students are reported to have paid between Rs 60,000 and Rs 1.20 lakh as fees for the course.

Observers point out that there is no question about the desirability of such a project in an economically backward state like Orissa. But what has puzzled most people here is the decision of the state Government to go ahead with a project of such a magnitude without first scrutinising the credentials of the promoters.

—FARZAND AHMED in Bhubaneswar



John and Lily Choppala (right): dents thwarted in their endeavour

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PAINTINGS

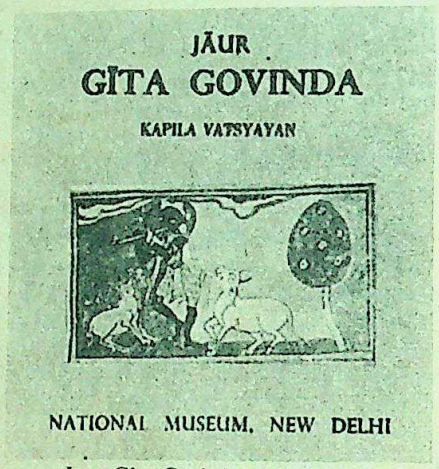
The Artful Forger

IT MAY be the most celebrated fake ever to hit the Indian art market. But when officials of the National Museum in New Delhi acquired it in 1976, the 30-page manuscript was promptly hailed as one of the great breakthroughs in ancient miniature painting—the purchase itself was considered a coup. In the next five years Indian art scholars delved deep into the manuscript's chronology and history—it was dated 1593, the verses in ancient Devanagari script appeared to be a variation on the popular *Gita-Govinda* theme, the language an intermingling of Gujarati and Mewari, the fading miniature paintings a slight deviation from the sixteenth century Chaurapanchasika group, and the source of the manuscript was ascribed to a tiny village called Jaur near Udaipur.

By January 1982, the National Museum had published a critical monograph on the "Jaur Gita-Govinda". Wrote Dr Kapila Vatsyayan, art historian, dancer, and deputy director of cultural affairs in the Ministry of Education, who authored the book: "The Jaur Gita-Govinda raises many important questions of the development of languages and dialects and the evolution of miniature painting styles during the last quarter of the sixteenth century... (It is) an important piece of evidence for a reassessment of the evolution of early Rajasthani painting." Leading experts on ancient art, including Dr B.N. Goswamy of the Chandigarh Museum, Dr Anand Krishna, and B.M. Jawalia, a scriptologist, confirmed that the manuscript was almost 400 years old.

Last fortnight nobody was quite so sure any more. After a young art scholar demolished the manuscript's claims to antiquity, by exposing it as a brilliantly executed fake by a master forger, Badri Lal Chitrakar Bhilwarawala at a seminar on art history at Ahmedabad last January, the Jaur Gita-Govinda suddenly became the hottest potato in the National Museum collection.

The pudgy, bespectacled, dhoti-clad artist was paraded before the assembled historians and he explained detail his painting techniques, colour-making of ancient parchment and scrolls, and the intricate ageing process he used to fool the experts. "Even before selling the painting," he confirmed last fortnight in his cramped atelier in Bhilwara, "I had shown it in a slightly incomplete form to Dr Sreedhar Andhare of the Prince of Wales Museum in Bombay and Dr Pramod Chandra, who teaches at Harvard, and told them that it was my work. I sold it to a Surat dealer in February 1975, but God knows how many hands it passed through before reaching the National Museum."



Jaur Gita Govinda: a hot potato

Authentic: It was clear last fortnight that the country's leading art historians were running scared on the issue of the Jaur Gita-Govinda. Soon after the Ahmedabad disclosures virtually every expert connected with its purchase and initial authentication was called to Delhi to reassess the yellowing folios. The verdict, according to Vatsyayan, was whole-hearted approval of the manuscript: "The Jaur Gita-Govinda w... ined again after these rumor... around... Badri Lal may have ma... fakes but certainly not the Ja... Govinda and it is too bad that ... scholars take (his claims) seriously."

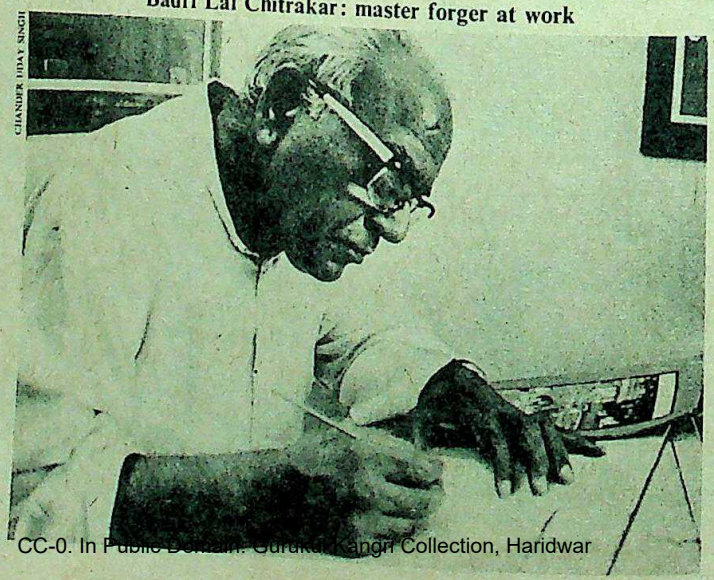
Although, in the exclusive socie... collectors and museums, news of fr... deception rarely filters to the p... it is apparent that brilliant compos... the master-craftsman are not uncom... collections around the world. Earl... Badri miniature of the seasons fou... to the Los Angeles Country Mu... Pratapaditya Pal, curator of the ... wrote a research document on the ... dating it 1450 A.D. The *Shatritu V...* story of six seasons, was treated as a ... rough for the pre-Akbari period, t... art scholars familiar with the Badri ... of painting disillusioned its owners.

Nearly Perfect: Examples of La... pop up even more frequently in ... collections. Saryu Doshi, a Bomb... art historian, affirms that she first s... 1971, adding that the forgery was ... culously made that it was almost im... to tell that it was one. In Bhilwa... sons, painters themselves, confi... "There is no 'expert' in the world ... father has not fooled," said Gyan P... the second of his five sons. "His kn... of ancient paintings is vast, and he ... master-artist that he knows how to ... knowledge and make paintings ... even more genuine than the auth... themselves."

Delving deep into the history ... ture painting, the self-taught but ta... illiterate artist discovered that the ... and early sixteenth centuries form ... kest period for historians—an era of ... ignorance and uncertainty betwee... tter-known Jain period and the Mu... Rajasthani schools which ... Capitalising on this fact ... set his forgeries within ... istic framework of this ... paintings are never co... existing works of art. ... out entirely original ... sitions on the basis ... manuscripts and ver... he comes across, he im... alters, and blends mo... period to achieve the ... is looking for.

Explains Doshi: ... innovation of Badri ... succeeds in fooling the ... Every expert who d... Badri Lal painting fe... has stumbled onto s... new and exciting, and ... is a breakthrough."

Badri Lal Chitrakar: master forger at work



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A Badri Lal forgery: vast knowledge of ancient paintings and mastery of techniques

IRONICALLY it is difficult to fault Badri Lal forgery. His paper is from old manuscripts dating as the seventeenth century, and put complicated ageing process. he succeeds in laying his hands parchment which contains an manuscript—often with the the paintings left blank. It is not the master forger to fill in the an artfully-conceived painting the verses, age the paintings to to the script, and pass off the uscript as original.

the pigments used by Badri Lal rom the same minerals and stones, same techniques, as those used a ears ago, it is virtually impossible s forgeries by dating the paints. o his *Shatritu Varnan* was gh the paces with a string of d tests in the US including a lysis test by top-ranking antiques- Johnson. The result was an unqualified endorsement of the painting, which was then dated 1450 A.D. Although modern paint-brushes from Bombay are used for the cheap miniatures supplied to wholesale dealers, Lal himself will use only a brush made from the tail-hairs of a live squirrel and the quill of a pigeon-feather. "I know more about colours, paper and the ancient painting techniques than all these so-called experts put together," boasted the master-craftsman, "I can make paints today which will last as long as the Ajanta frescoes have, locate the exact materials needed for a Basohli, Kangra, Kishangadh, Deogarh or Malwa painting, and identify the exact style which will fool any of them."

Aggrieved Artist: However, the 62-year-old Lal's eyesight is failing. Recognising that he can no longer paint the brilliant forgeries that were his staple in the past, the artist has trained three of his sons and three employed craftsmen to continue the art of miniature-making. While he continues to oversee the entire operation, he insists that the days of forging are behind him. Explaining why he became a forger he says: "I have spent my whole life in *sadhana*, learning the arts and techniques, but what do I have to show for it? How is it that a Husain sells for Rs 40,000 and nobody will give me even a thousand?" Meanwhile in Delhi the controversy continues. The contradictions and inconsistencies, arising from what appeared to be a concerted attempt to cover up the fiasco, were piling up last fortnight. But the purchase of an occasional fake, given the high margins which can be earned by the enterprising forger, is an occupational hazard for any collector or institution. Explained Haridas Swali, one of India's leading private collectors of ancient art and antiques: "Fakes land up in the collections of the greatest institutes and collectors in the world. The occasional discovery of a forgery in a museum collection only shows that the museum took risks and followed a pragmatic approach to acquisitions."

—CHANDER UDAY SINGH in Bhilwara

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CRICKET

Pitched Battle

EVEN as the Indian cricket team unpacked its bags in London, the buzz of speculation back home grew louder and louder. For once, the prospects of S.M. Gavaskar and his 'boys' on the unpredictable green pitches of England took a back seat to charges of favouritism and parochialism that filled the air. Six of the 16 are from Bombay, and this raised hackles all over the north. In a politely disapproving letter to S.K. Wankhede, the grand old president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), 11 of the 27 affiliated units requested a general body meeting to discuss the selection of the team.

The five-member national selection committee is headed by former Test cricketer Polly Umrigar of Bombay. Gavaskar is reputed to have considerable influence on the committee. The team announced included new players Ghulam Parkar and Suru Nayak of Bombay, and others thought they had been unjustly preferred to Mohinder Amarnath of Delhi—whose dogged innings in the Ranji Trophy final brought Delhi victory over Karnataka—and Rakesh Shukla, also of Delhi and a steady all-rounder who has time and again proved himself in the Ranji meat-grinder. What is more, there is no back-up to wicket-keeper Syed Kirmani, although both Parkar and Yashpal Sharma can keep wickets.

Accusations: The fireworks began immediately after the list was announced. I.S. Bindra, president of the Punjab Cricket Association, said that the Indian cricket team looked more like a Bombay Ranji Trophy team. The representatives of three BCCI units—Railways, Punjab and Delhi—alleged that the non-inclusion of a second wicket-keeper was a "ploy" to deny Ved Raj of the Railways a chance and bring in Bombay's Zulfikar Parkar "through the back door" during the tour. As for the supposed emphasis on youth, they asked pointed questions about Maninder Singh and Gursharan Singh, two young players of the north who have made their mark this season.

The Delhi unit was particularly peeved because only one national selector, Vijay Mehra, watched the Ranji Trophy final, where Delhi overtook a massive Karnataka total, anchored by Amarnath who fell just short of a double century. Gavaskar also watched this match. The Ranji semi-finals, too, were treated casually by the selectors. In fact, the 16 for England must have been chosen even before the last, crucial stages of the domestic season were through.

The BCCI's acts of omission and commission set the scene for accusations about "godfathers" in the selection committee and team vice-captain G.R. Viswanath was driven to appeal for an end to the controversy, in case it demoralised the players. There is a real fear that the BCCI may be split down the middle if Wankhede does not call the general body meeting and disgruntled units go ahead with their

Balanced Team: Controversy aside, the Indian team is no better or worse than its predecessor. Most of the players themselves. Nayak is relatively unknown and the only left-handed batsman in the party. He is a seamer who can also bowl arm spinners. If he gets into the Test team, it will have to be at the cost of Randhir Singh because India cannot afford to have four bowlers—always assuming that the two arm spinners Dilip Doshi and Padmakar Shivalkar will play: Doshi because he is familiar with English conditions, and Shastri because he can bat in a tight corner. Off-spinner Suru Yadav does not fit in the present scheme of things—play as tight as possible and keep over-rate as niggardly as possible. The happiest inclusion is that of Ashok Malhotra of Haryana, a hard-hitting batsman who came off well against Keith Fletcher a few months ago.

However balanced the Indian team, England in England is a formidable proposition. Cold and damp weather, green pitches, and the depressing prospect having been rubbed out on the last tour in 1974 will all combine against the tourists. The only silver lining is that England will be without Geoff Boycott and Graham Gooch who have been banned from England cricket after their "rebel" tour of South Africa. This is, however, counterpointed by the fact that with Fletcher's unimpressive stint as captain in India, the English selectors may turn again to Mike Brearley and his golden touch. In that case, it is going to be a very hard summer for the Indians.

TEST RECORD OF INDIAN TEAM

S.M. GAVASKAR
Age 33
Tests 75
Runs 6,718
Wickets 1

S. PATIL
Age 26
Tests 13
Runs 730
Wickets 8

MADAN LAL
Age 32
Tests 22
Runs 497
Wickets 43

G. PARKAR
Age 27
(no tests)

G.R. VISHWANATH
Age 33
Tests 81
Runs 5,746
Wickets 1

P. ROY
Age 25
Tests 2
Runs 71
Wickets –

D. DOSHI
Age 35
Tests 24
Runs 99
Wickets 84

RANDHIR SI
Age 24
(no tests)

D.B. VENGSARKAR
Age 26
Tests 48
Runs 2,675
Wickets –

A. MALHOTRA
Age 25
Tests 2
Runs 31
Wickets –

S. YADAV
Age 25
Tests 15
Runs 207
Wickets 41

S. NAYAK
Age 27
(no tests)

Y.P. SHARMA
Age 28
Tests 22
Runs 1,071
Wickets –

KAPIL DEV
Age 23
Tests 38
Runs 1,468
Wickets 147

R. SHASTRI
Age 21
Tests 9
Runs 188
Wickets 27

S. KIRMANI
Age 32
Tests 54
Runs 1,774
Wickets 129

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S. NAYAK
Age 27
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S. KIRMAN
Age 32
Tests 54
Runs 1,774
Wickets 12

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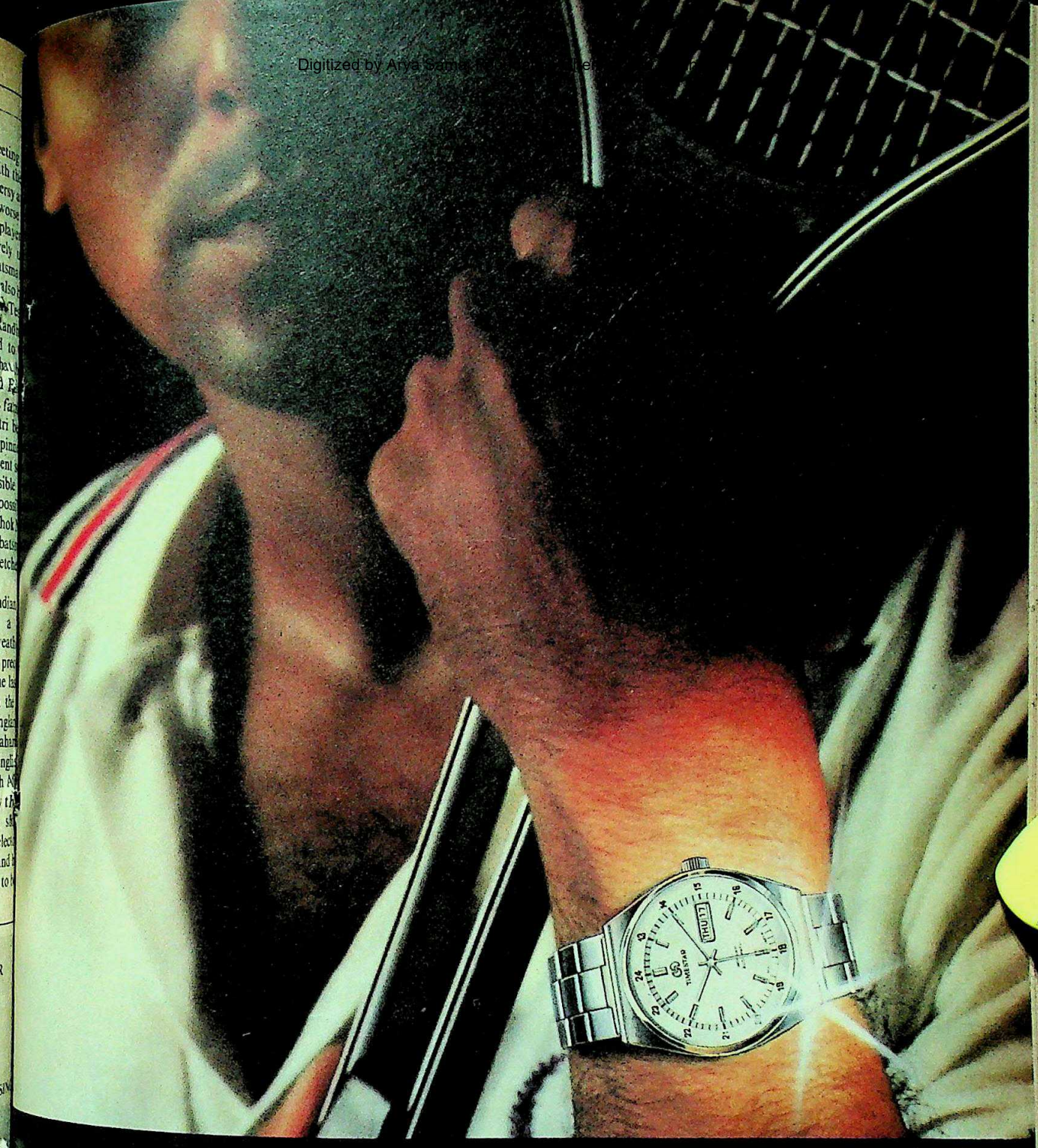

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AJIV GANDHI
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AJEEV MITTAL
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The centrespread in Mittal's book: overdoing the obvious

INDIAN political writing seems to move in cycles—two-wheeled cycles, that is. If the theme isn't Mrs Gandhi it is almost certain to be her progeny. Came the Emergency, any number of "authors" suddenly rediscovered Mrs Gandhi and Sanjay and of treacle-covered tomes the post-Emergency period, the placed by vitriol but the theme, the same. Now that the heir anointed, the long-suffering public is fated to flounder in a of literary sycophancy a la

him credit, Rajeev Mittal, the ased author of *Rajiv Gandhi: oday* has been quickest off the hat is about all that can be in black ink on the balance s of course, one other item (but n it should go in is debatable) . if anything, the book the Olympian heights to which has climbed in this country. by that yardstick, Mittal must ns of his own. Sycophants are mincing their hallelujahs and troduction sets the tone for the rest of the pap when it describes Rajiv (Gandhi, that is) as "a vision laden with promise, a hope and the new theme... the clouds are water laden, the rain descending and the universe is unfolding as it should". There is perhaps a certain irony in the fact that Rajiv at the moment is wandering lonely as a cloud but even Wordsworth would be hard pressed to draw comparisons between Rajiv and cuckoos or daffodils. Mittal, unfortunately, has no such constraints and proceeds to romp through the book with gay and misplaced abandon.

Sycophancy Stakes: The reason why Mittal has been so quick off the mark in the sycophancy stakes is that the entire book is based on Rajiv's election campaign in Amethi in mid-1981 which is described in the opening paragraph of the book thus: "the ritualistic campaigning journey of Rajiv Gandhi to the *parvas* and villages of Amethi through its parched lands wallowing in scorching heat gushing forth whirlwinds of dust and dust and dust and despite the dust, the whole electorate seems to have known of the Second Coming and are hopeful and waiting for it to rain as they find the thunder proclaiming *Datta, Dayadhavam, Damyatta* for another Gandhi, heir to the great and compelling tradition has arrived to weed the cactus out and redeem their tryst with the destiny". It is not clear whether the cactii are redeeming their tryst with destiny or Rajiv Gandhi but certainly for the rest of the book Rajiv outpaces the cactus as endless and similar paeans of praise roll off Mittal's typewriter like a column of ants heading for the honey pot. "He matters and matters," proclaims Mittal from the rooftops, "the theme is ambient; the necessity is vibrant; the reality is living".

The unreality, of course, is all-pervasive and the theme is not just ambient but ambulatory as one is treated to no less than 84 photographs in the 76-page book, a majority of them campaign pictures of Rajiv standing, sitting, walking and talking. In fact, the entire effect is similar to one of those baby books that mothers keep showing of the same baby in various stages of growing up.

With so many photographs, many of them full-page, it leaves very little space for words which is at least something to be thankful for. The printing, it must be admitted, is of a high standard. But Rs 195 per copy seems an excessively high price to pay for 76 pages of sugar-coating or else Mittal may have forgotten that sugar prices have dropped in recent months.

—DILIP BOBB

TS

s a characteristic smile... a smile". "Let's find another ad... a killer smile, a winning ould you say that?". "No, a " the aide tossed his head aside as if he had made his point.

Gandhi. Is he the desired and er necessity so readily and epted or is a matter of some personality? A question which has been answered. The whole of what has been and what has to ushed in the unique rhythm of today and with a charm as as elusive.

- *The perspectives are enlarging. The search is for an oasis. The journey howsoever long be not tiresome, the light beckons. All look to Rajiv Gandhi.... Propitiously is he circumstanced. Cynicism and prejudices apart, the clouds are water laden, the rain descending and the universe is unfolding as it should.*

- *His hands handsome and friendly have a promise and a warmth. His handshake is firm and wholesome. He has a touch, a gesture, a phrase to match every mood and every meeting... it is a Rajiv Gandhi smile—unique in its sympathy, sobriety and thoughtfulness.*

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Bharat Bijlee believes in this philosophy. Take an example. The Navy uses our low-vibration motors on its frigates. The lower the noise, the better the chances of escaping detection by enemy submarines. We use very sophisticated Noise-Level Meters to make sure we meet the Navy's rigid standards. Apart from a wide range of high quality motors we make transformers and lifts, as well as ventilation equipment and mine accessories.

Bharat Bijlee, a private sector company, represents 35 years of continuous development, backed by Siemens know-how. Today, we're poised for multi-dimensional growth. Manufacturing and marketing high technology products. Custom-engineered for tomorrow.

Bharat Bijlee Limited, Bombay 400 025.

Bharat Bijlee Limited
Transformers, Motors, Lifts.

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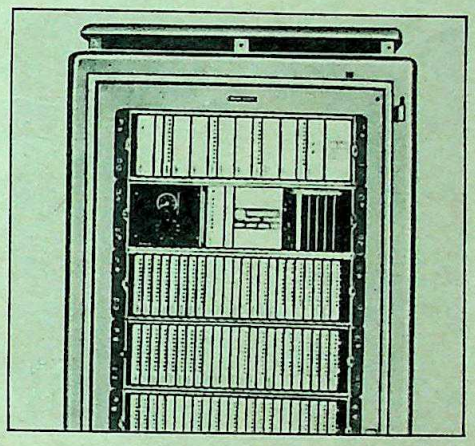
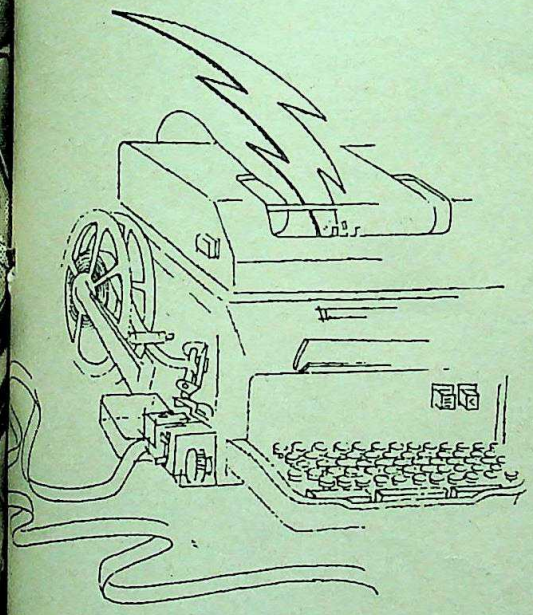
The things we do with power...

We help tap it... for more reliable communication.





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In the great Koyna earthquake of 1967, our Power Line Carrier Communication Equipment was the only link between the power house and the outside world, and helped prevent further damage to the power house.

Today, our systems' reliability is acknowledged in Yugoslavia, Australia and New Zealand — as also by utilities and electricity boards throughout our country.

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BROWN BOVERI

HINDUSTAN BROWN BOVERI

HBB—making the most of energy, with high technology systems.

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INSAT

A Damp Squib

FOR ALL its pioneering role, INSAT-1A is a satellite that the Space Department may want to quickly forget. Almost the only thing that can be claimed on its behalf is that it is operational: certainly a triumph in itself, but one robbed of much of its real value.

The launch was late by 22 months. Despite that leeway, most of the related ground facilities to make use of the satellite are not in position. By the time they are, the satellite will probably have lived out its life, reduced from the planned seven years to perhaps just three because of the unanticipated burning up of vital hydrazine fuel.

Even before the launch from Cape Canaveral, Florida on April 10, some fuel had to be off-loaded from the satellite since its weight exceeded the stipulated 1,150 kg. The US National Agency for Space Administration (NASA), contracted to do the launching, had insisted that its Delta rocket would not otherwise be able to put the satellite into the required orbit.

Hitches: Later, up in space, the dish-shaped C band antenna, the single most crucial part of the satellite, refused to open, blanking out the only means of communication with INSAT-1A. When all other manoeuvres failed, the scientists at ground control in Hassan, Karnataka, played their last card: firing the thrusters under the closed antenna in an effort to literally thrust the antenna open. Tests at the Palo Alto headquarters of Ford Aerospace and Communication Corporation, which built the satellite, had shown that firing the thrusters would not damage the carbon-fibre antenna.

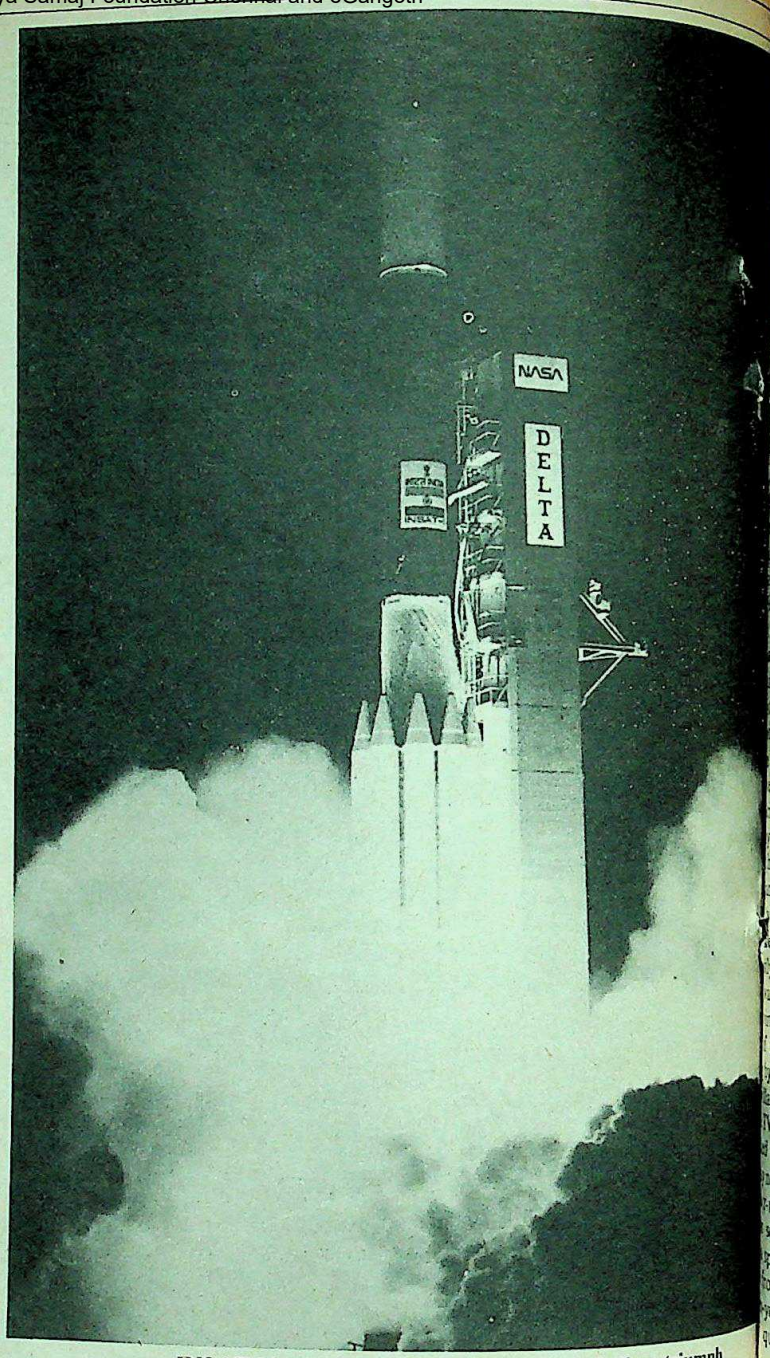
The first firing failed, and it took a second burst, using up further precious fuel, to eventually work the trick. Meanwhile, the satellite had drifted eastward and been nudged gently back to its space home 36,000 km over the equator, at 74 degrees East. Each of these manoeuvres saw the fuel reserves drop further, and more than a fortnight after launch, problems still plagued the satellite.

The solar sail, designed to counterbalance the array of solar panels on the opposite side of the satellite and give it stability, refused to open. Until it does, the thrusters will have to be fired periodically to keep the satellite in position. Space Department scientists refused to speculate on the full impact which the loss of fuel would have on the satellite's life. But a Central minister responsible for the satellite confided that its life might not be more than three years instead of the planned seven.

Even as the scientists at Hassan were struggling with the wayward satellite, moves were initiated in Delhi to inquire into the series of technical problems and the possibility of costly human error. But all this was well in the future on launch date. The blast-off had already been pushed back twice because of mechanical failures; and on April 10, there remained just two days before the booking of the space park[illegible] expire. Storm clouds milled ov[illegible]

Uncertainties: Project Direc[illegible] Kale mulled over an astrologer's [illegible] that the original schedule was [illegible] picious 'muhurat' for the la[illegible] Dhawan, chairman of the nat[illegible] nation committee, sat quietly [illegible] flickering video screens monito[illegible] on the launch pad. The clea[illegible] certainties had taken their toll, [illegible] excitement had dissipated into [illegible] tigue and latent tension.

Back home in Delhi, [illegible]



INSAT blasts off from Cape Canaveral: hollow triumph

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would make use of the satel-
demonstration: none of them had
to witness the launching in
days later, when the satellite
like a problem child, some of
ck mockingly about the "deaf
satellite and call for

-2, and counting," intoned the
at the mission director's centre
entists and technicians, both
merican, busied themselves
e duties. The heavens spent
the nick of time, some rain
ring a near full moon in the
sky. Criss-crossing searchlight
the 116-foot Delta rocket
ssibly picturesque blast-off. A
coconut, brought by one of the
ss, was offered to the gods
ve of tension, the rain came

Planning: In Nagpur, on the
ching, Mrs Gandhi was laying
stone for a satellite-linked
plex that should have been
the launching of INSAT-1A.
home the disastrous planning
ities as the bizarre timing of
. The final clearance for the
had been given in 1977, but the
ces for the ground facilities
o years later. Charan Singh,
er in the Janata government,
y stonewalled the whole pro-
ste of money. The delay he
ually made it so.

the clearances came only in
by the present schedule, some of
ages in six states that are to get
TV programmes via the satellite
d to the system only in 1987.
not be around by then, though
-1B will have been pressed into
second satellite was initially
space stand-by, and scheduled
om INSAT-1A at the end of the
year life span. Now it seems
quickly become the primary

triumph

pace parking
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for the la
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sat quietly
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ssipated into
nsion.
n Delhi,

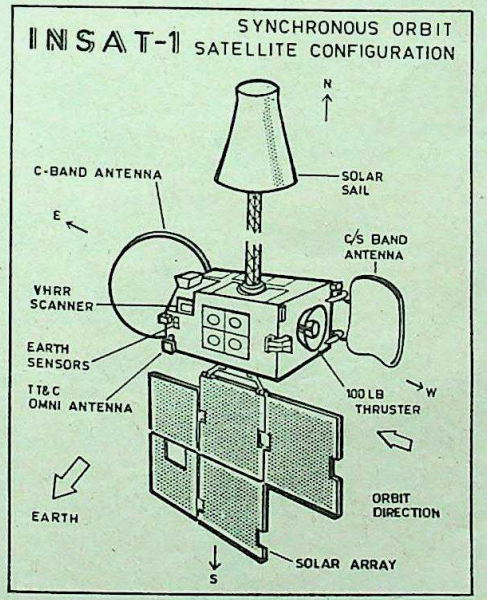
all the ground facilities,
the telecommunications seg-
will be reasonably ready by the
ute is made available for oper-
but even here, only 1,400 of the
telephone channels will be
initially. Full utilisation may
till mid-1983.

Meteorological Department
in New Delhi, a week after the
were still being polished in the
the data utilisation centre.
were being tested and related
still being put into position.

Officials in the department considered this state of readiness a minor miracle, given the inhuman schedule to which they had had to work. Construction of a six-storeyed building started only in 1979, with barely a year left for the initial launching date. For some of the equipment, indents were placed with the Directorate-General of Supplies and Disposals only in February 1981, and orders placed with suppliers in November with delivery dates six to eight months ahead.

Of the 100 unmanned meteorological data collection platforms that are to transmit weather-related data to Delhi via the satellite, only eight will be in place by the end of 1982. The others will follow in batches of 24 at six-monthly intervals. Officials insist this is according to the schedule, and deny that there have been any delays. But the special receiver sets that are to be used by district officials for getting the department's disaster warnings based on satellite data are still being developed. Fabrication of the sets will start next year. The disaster warning system may not be fully operational till 1984.

Big Delay: The ministry that needed a disaster warning at least a couple of years



ago was Information and Broadcasting. INSAT-1A can provide a nation-wide TV hook-up, but there is money now for only 340 special direct reception sets that will be deployed in the villages. Even these will start getting delivered only from December. In contrast, seven years ago, the Government had been able to provide 2,400 direct reception sets for the satellite instructional television experiment (SITE) programme. Manufacturers are only now being approached to produce more sets quickly.

Even as the satellite hovered overhead, the ministry was looking into the feasibility of a more cost-effective way of sending TV programmes to the villages. Information and Broadcasting Minister Vasant Sathe was trying to push through a proposal to fit on to microwave towers with special antennae that would be able to receive and transmit TV signals which in turn could be picked up by ordinary TV sets in a five-kilometre radius. This would obviate the need for the costly direct reception sets and make things move a little faster. But engineers were objecting that the microwave towers were not built to take the extra load of the special antennae. If their objections stand, the only way out will be to construct at least future towers with the strength to take the extra load.

TV programme readiness is no better. The National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has been commissioned to do no more than 50 special school programmes of 20 minutes each: a stock of programmes that will last just 25 days at the planned rate of two programmes per day. For the rest, the ministry is falling back on existing Doordarshan programmes and dusting off cans containing old SITE programmes.

Little Action: The poor programme readiness roused lively fears among scientists concerned about the uses to which INSAT would be put. Some at the Ahmedabad Space Applications Centre warned that since there was little action in hand to set up field programming centres, select the target villages, or train personnel for maintaining the community TV sets, the satellite would eventually be used for beaming feature films, a mish-mash of other entertainment programmes and sports events.

The criticism implicit in that warning was lost in Delhi, where Rajiv Gandhi was said to be furious over the initial satellite failure because he would not be able to ensure nation-wide colour telecasting of the Asian Games. Space Department officials confessed that there had been pressure even earlier to allow the use of the existing experimental satellites for beaming Test cricket telecasts. They had refused on the ground that this was not the purpose of an experimental satellite; that argument will not be available in the case of INSAT.

Serious use of INSAT's television transponders would have meant beaming separate programmes for children, farmers and housewives for at least four hours a day, or about 1,500 hours a year. The programming capacity for this amount of work simply does not exist, calling as it does for probably a 50 per cent increase in total studio capacity. But, as a Doordarshan producer said, "Vasant Sathe is more concerned about making colour TV a national policy."—T.N. NINAN with ROHINI NILEKANI at Cape Canaveral

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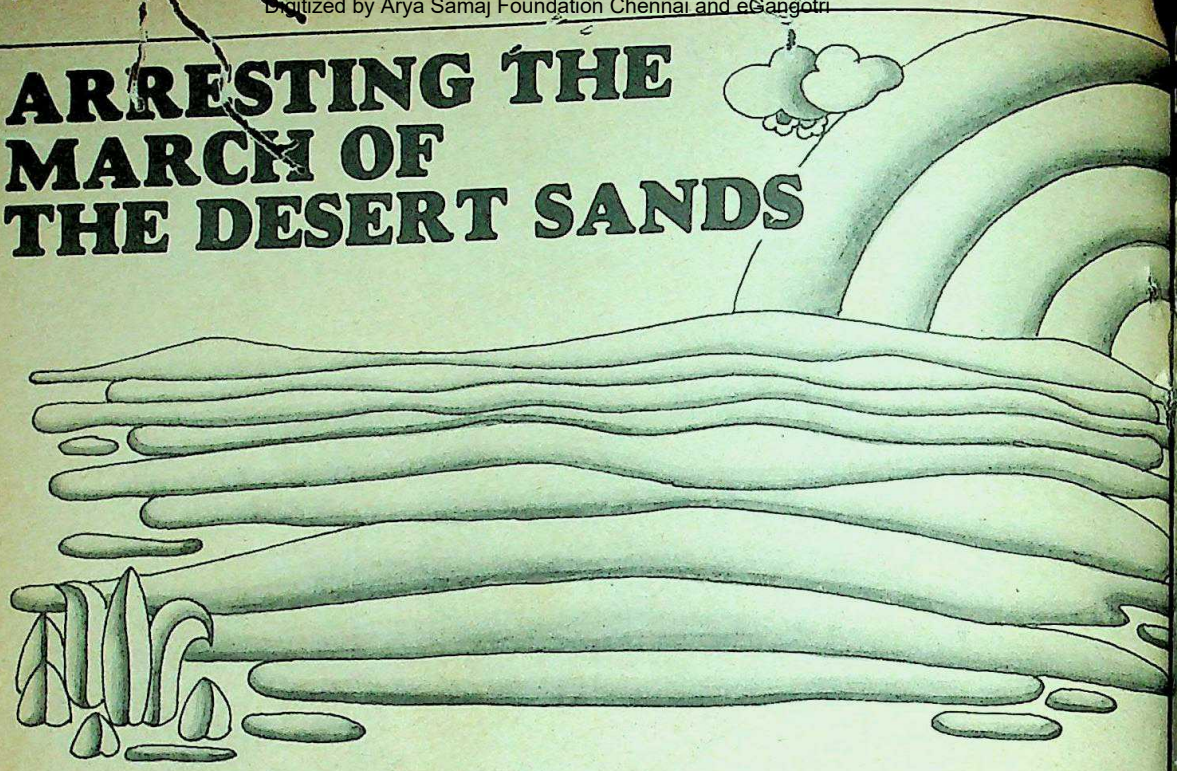
ARRESTING THE MARCH OF THE DESERT SANDS



How Premier Irrigation have taken u the challenge of keeping the Thar dese at bay and succeeding.

By providing the Hanumangarh Forest Division with a total irrigation package—planned, manufactured and installed by Premier.

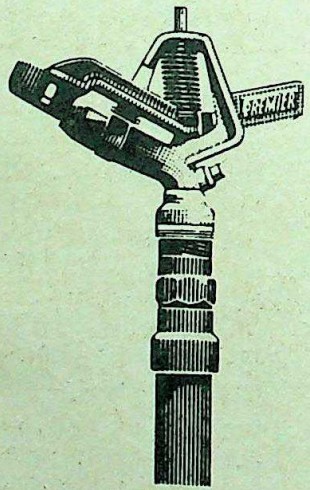
And this combined afforestation effort by Premier and the Forest Division has already shown results.

In the form of more fodder and fuel for the inhabitants of this bleak corner of Rajasthan. Another success story to be chalked up for Premier—the irrigation specialists always ready to take on challenges and win.

Other reasons why Premier have so many success stories to their credit.

Premier have done intensive extension work, identified areas, held demonstrations, worked with the authorities, organised training programmes and provided close technical and service support for farmers.

Premier provides a complete irrigation package : they identify sites, develop water resources, supply and install pumping and distribution systems,



train supervisors and users and maintenance arrangements.

Today, for all these reasons, Pre have the support of State Gov ments, State Irrigation, Agricult and Rural Development Depart the Central Water Board, Union Ministries of Irrigation and Agric the Planning Commission and t World Bank.

PI

PREMIER IRRIGATION

The Water M

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Branches and Offices
throughout India

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03. Braving jungles, incense heat and untold ardship, three intrepid pioneers set out on a voyage of discovery.

07. At Sakchi the search ends. And dia's industrial renaissance begins.

was the culmination of a n. And in its way an ssion of the nationalist spirit. s India's first steel mill 'built Swadeshi money' as Jamsetji had wanted it to be.

was he who had sown the , selected the technical ts, funded the project and ded inspiration and direction s sons and associates. Now, years after his death, the h had ended. But the early had been rough, with pointments and failures at step. Still they had pressed on d–Dorabji Tata, Weld and vala, the first of the intrepid eers, spurred on by the spirit of nture. And in time came reward.

A chimney came up, a township started to grow. And men came from the cities, the towns, the villages—the first of the Tata Steel men. Soon the first ingot was rolled.

That was how Tata Steel was born—and Jamshedpur. By the endeavour of a fraternity of people aspiring, struggling and achieving. Today, Tata Steel is one of the country's largest and most progressive industrial enterprises—and Jamshedpur a city of opportunity. This is as Jamsetji Tata would have wanted it. For he firmly believed that the wealth which industry generates should benefit the people, enrich the nation.

75 T TATA STEEL

1907-1982

TATA STEEL

HTC-TIS-4561

What benefits the people, benefits the nation.

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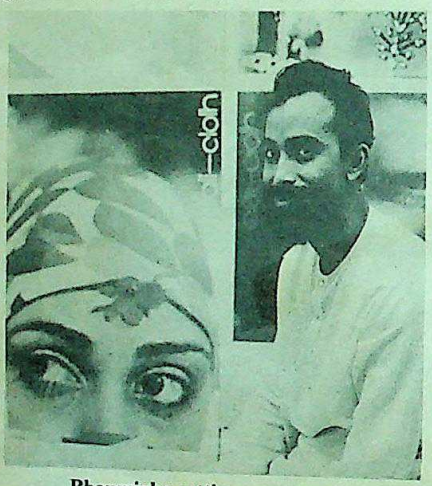
Cartier: marking time

■ The name is a classic among time-watchers; and even the blurb—"les must de Cartier"—has come to epitomise the utmost in luxury. Yet last fortnight, the great French jeweller and watch-maker **Louis Cartier**'s grandson, **Alain Cartier** was stalking India in search of something. What?

"The originals," said the mild-mannered scion to the Cartier empire, who divulged that some of the greatest custom-made watches, clocks and *objets d' art* his grandfather produced were snapped up by Indian maharajahs. Now on a spree to try and buy them back, Cartier, who is still in his twenties and with his hair parted in the centre looks like a schoolboy. He had sold one such piece—a crystal clock flanked by two Hindu deities an erstwhile prince had ordered—for 320,000 Swiss francs (Rs 15.4 lakh). Though Cartier now produces luxury fashion accessories, the nostalgia for the "grand classics" of the 1920s and 1930s is undimmed. As it turned out, this trip to India yielded nothing but Cartier is confident that time isn't running out. For a Cartier it never does.

■ It was the crowning irony of a short but highly successful career. **Subrata Bhaumick**, 36, created minor history last fortnight by breaking the 30-year stranglehold that Bombay artists have had over the prestigious Art Director of the Year award. The award, presented by the Commercial Artists' Guild, is the equivalent of an Oscar in the field of graphics and design. The irony lay in the fact that Bhaumick broke not just a stranglehold but both his legs as well in a car crash in Ahmedabad, where he is based, and received the award sitting in a wheelchair. The acclaim was for his work in the Calico advertising campaign which has become a trend-setter in advertising design ever since Bhaumick evolved it in 1976.

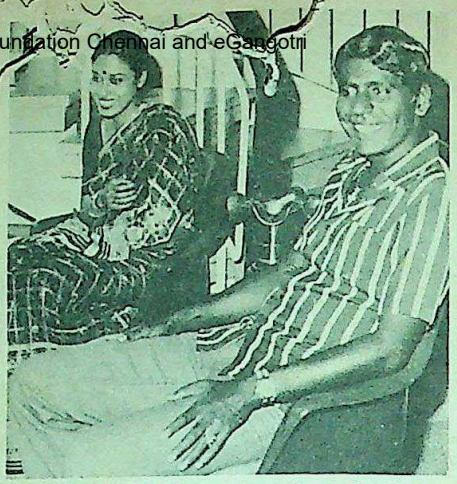


Bhaumick: setting new trends

■ The score: Deuce and shortly to be game, set and match for **Vijay Amritraj**, 28, the perennial hope of Indian tennis, who has found himself a permanent doubles partner at last—but off the court. She is **Shyamala Wenceslaus**, 20, the second daughter of a Colombo businessman, like Amritraj a devout Catholic but unlike him a stranger to tennis—she has never owned a racquet in her life.

The marriage, when it takes place in early June, will not be the end of a story-book romance of sports star and starry-eyed fan. A typical arranged match, the delicate negotiations were carried out through discreet intermediaries, who included an Indian parish priest and a Sri Lankan diplomat. Amritraj's father was hunting for a bride for his famous son and on an introduction by mutual friends in Madras, visited M.G. Wenceslaus in Colombo.

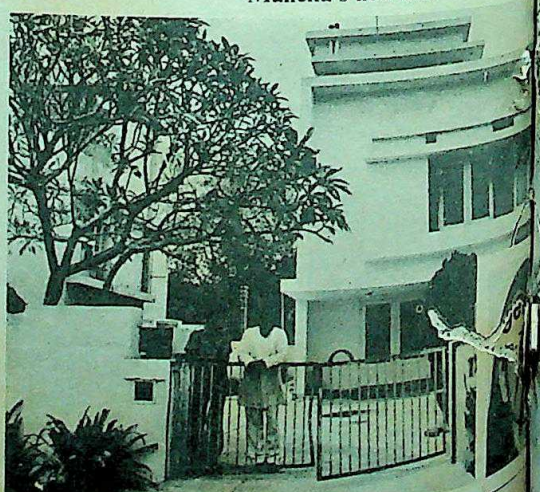
Says the demure Shyamala: "Success hasn't spoilt him. He is so charming and unassuming." Wasn't she nervous about marrying a foreigner? "Are Indians foreigners?" she shot back.



Amritraj and Shyamala: mixed doubles

■ It's a long way from the power and glory of the best address in India—1 Safdarjung Road—but the prime minister's errant daughter-in-law **Maneka Gandhi** isn't doing too badly by way of accommodation. Moving out of the motel she was staying in, Maneka [illegible] large comfortable ho[illegible] the corner last fortnig[illegible] the princely sum of [illegible] a month in the fashiona[illegible] Links area. In terms of [illegible] tary topography, it m[illegible] rely three kilometers [illegible] house she left. B[illegible] is cally located across [illegible] from little Feroze [illegible] school. As for Man[illegible] that "only the [illegible] brave person in this [illegible] me his house", cour[illegible] parently not flagging [illegible] Though the house is [illegible] a name-plate annou[illegible] new occupant's name [illegible] moment, it only [illegible] "Beware of Dogs" [illegible]

Maneka's new nest



SIGN POST

■ **Died:** B.P. Ma[illegible] former Bihar chief m[illegible] lowing a heart attack

■ **Awarded:** Amrit[illegible] 63, Punjabi poetess an[illegible] the Rs 1.5 lakh [illegible] Jnanpith Award for h[illegible] poems *Kagaz Te Kan[illegible]*

■ **Exiled:** Laldeng[illegible] the Mizo National[illegible] order of the [illegible] Government. He left [illegible] York on April 21. He [illegible] living as a guest of th[illegible] Government since [illegible] the Government call[illegible] of exile in London.

■ **Resigned:** K[illegible] 48, as additional [illegible] general of Doordar[illegible] said he resigned r[illegible] succumb. (See page [illegible]

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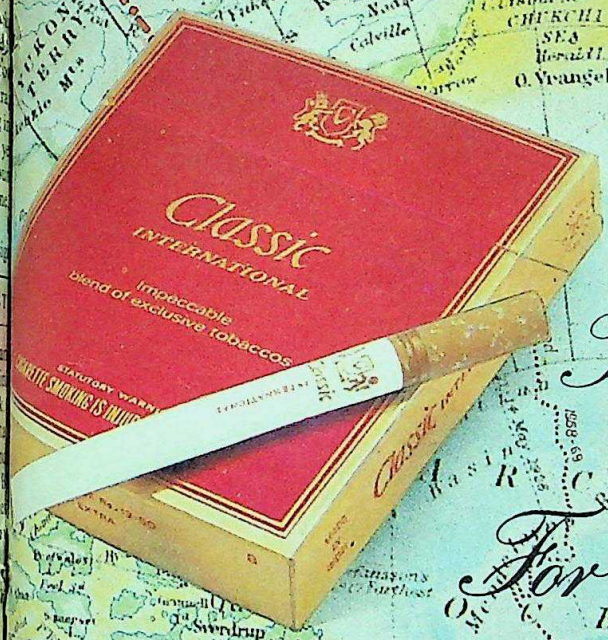
Presenting

Classic
INTERNATIONAL



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CIGARETTE SMOKING IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH

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Birdwatching was my scene, until I learnt to Tingle with them.

Mugpot.

When a poor guy slogs harder than the rest for the Eco paper, the guys at college call him "Mugpot".

The girls never smiled at me or gave me 'The Look'. They'd turn their backs on me...and sniff.

The only girl who ever spoke to me was my sister.

But her friends wanted my notes. Oh, yes, they wanted my notes alright. Her friends never asked me, they'd ask **her**. I was so fed up.

I took up the next best thing. Birdwatching.

Kingfishers and humming birds.

One day, while watching Bul Buls, my life changed.

My eyes were glued to the binoculars, when something entirely different came into focus.

Two neat numbers were strolling down the road towards my house. One of them was my pesky sister. The other...whew!

The other was a Number 12. (If you've seen Bo Derek, you know what I mean.)

I ran inside, drenched myself with after shave (Brut!). And my arms being terribly under-nourished, I rolled my sleeves down.

A cry of 'Mugseee' shrilled out. My voice quavered out an answer. Then the girls were in the doorway. "Mugsy, my friend wants to borrow..."

"Hi!" said The Vision.

My hands were wet and my heart was on its worst behaviour. "You look ill," said The Vision, and the notes slipped out of my hands and scattered over the floor.

"Why, I'm fine," I said, trying to growl from the pit of my stomach.

"But you do look feverish," The Dream insisted. Just then my sister left the room. The 'Dream' leaned towards me and whispered, "Say, I know something that will really perk you up...

"Have you ever Tingled?"

I almost choked. Was I hearing things.

"Ting...Tingle...heh...heh... well. I'd love to." My throat felt like sandpaper.

My sister returned and they whispered among themselves. I saw my sister nodding vigorously. She went to the fridge and returned with three chilled bottles of Tingler.

"Hey!" I said, "that stuff is strictly for the birds and the weight-watchers."

"It's for everybody," the girls purred. "And you're going to Tingle."

"Now, take a sip, and concentrate on your tongue." I took a longish sip, and felt the delicious flavour of chilled, tangy lemons...mmm...lovely.

"Don't swallow. Swirl your tongue around. Right! Can you feel it? Huh? Can you feel the Tingle?"

I rolled my tongue around...and a million bubbles popped against my palate...and then I felt it. A Tingling sensation spreading slowly all over. I was Wow! In sheer excitement, I burst out.

"I'm Tingling!"

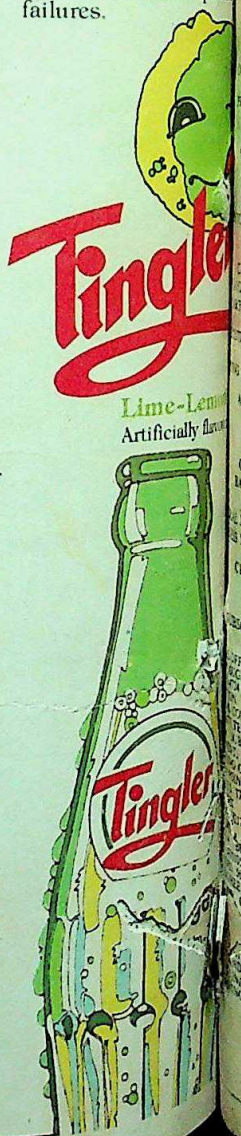
"Keep going," she "Take small sips and concentrate on the fla I felt a gradual flow of confidence in my veins voice lost its quaver, an my knees didn't dance.

When we finished, S ran off to get another th bottles of T.

I sat there like a pu looking deep into the cy of "12".

And then, (Heaven must look kindly on me the lights blew out.

Thank God for powe failures.



Lime-Lem
Artificially flavou

Get the taste that Tingles.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

ONE OF the basic tenets of a democratic society is the symbiotic relationship that exists between national leaders and the media, a mutually advantageous link-up which can provide an important channel between those who govern and those who are, by consent, governed. That, at least, is the way it ought to be. All too frequently, as in India, the ideal is evident only in its neglect. While journalists usually find it within their reach to meet ministers and other top functionaries of the Government, the one person who matters has denied all but the most perfunctory access to the Indian media. Mrs Gandhi's recent interviews to Indian news people can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Her reluctance to talk to Indians contrasts sharply with the relatively easy access enjoyed by foreign journalists. Thus, it is almost standard practice for Mrs Gandhi to give a curtain-raising interview to a journalist from a country she may be visiting. Western newsmen, in particular, seem to have little problem in gaining access to her cloistered quarters in Parliament House or South Block. The closest Indian journalists get to her is at one of her press conferences—which too, for reasons yet unclear, seem to have dwindled in frequency.

Mrs Gandhi, who believes the Indian media is a part of her political opposition, obviously does not believe in making use of journalists like, say, a leader of the ilk of former US presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had so much of the Washington press corps eating out of the palm of his hand, and John F. Kennedy, who mastered television long before anyone else. It is a pity, because good communication not only provides for accurate information and analysis, it also makes for a more effective media image. And, if Mrs Gandhi's image has suffered in recent times—over the Antulay affair, the Maneka squabble—it is at least in part due to the inept handling of the media on her part.

It is significant, then, that in giving an interview to INDERJIT BADHWAR, *Mrs Gandhi did so not in his capacity as Washington correspondent of* INDIA TODAY *but as staff member of Jack Anderson's team of investigative reporters. Badhwar filed the interview for* INDIA TODAY, *summing up his own impressions of Mrs Gandhi in a lengthy introduction because it provides an insight into her current thinking on foreign policy issues at a time when India's foreign policy is in a developing phase.*

IMAGES of another kind have been current in the news in recent weeks with Doordarshan's grand plans for the future and the long-debated decision to go colour. To find out how compatible the new technology and facilities—the hardware—would be with the kind of programmes and human resources—the software—available to Doordarshan, Correspondent SUMIT MITRA *spoke with TV producers, front-of-camera people, advertisers and media people. From key centres such as Bombay, Calcutta, Bangalore and Jullundur cities, correspondents sent in files on the state of Doordarshan around the country. The result is this fortnight's cover story which looks at the sorry state in India of what is probably the most potent communication medium yet known. Said Mitra, who put the story together: "It's a 20th century medium battling a 19th century bureaucracy."*

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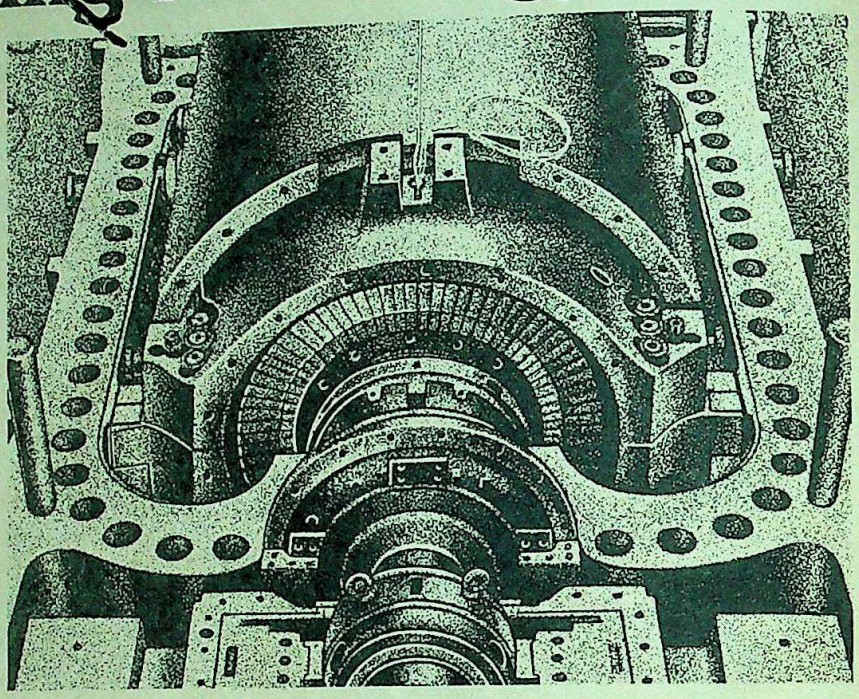
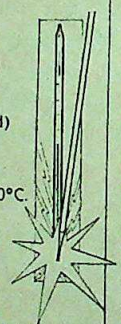
Welding Technology for the 80's



Everything you wanted to know about welding metallurgy ...and the 'futuristic' results possible today!

Welding Electrodes, Welding Metallurgy, Application Engineering...Here are a few selections to whet your appetite.

Hot tip for welding at sub-zero temperatures



For matters cryogenic:
PH 36 H(Spl) and PH 56 S (unalloyed) low hydrogen electrodes for applications up to −50°C;
PH 75 (2.5% Ni type) up to −60°C and PH 87 (3.5% Ni type) up to −100°C.

These electrodes are highly suited to the fabrication of vessels/ equipment in the chemical process industry.

Philips RS 304AB deposits an austenitic stainless steel weld with excellent impact properties at −196°C. It is used widely for applications like liquid oxygen tanks.

The smooth Stainless Steel Weld

Philips Stainless Steel Rutile-coated Electrodes—achieved by Philips through intensive research and development. Specially designed to weld smooth, almost ripple-and-spatter-free beads straight off!...To save you cost, time and labour in chipping and grinding.

Further: These unique Philips electrodes ensure deposits perfectly matched to the parent metal in chemistry and all properties. And they enable ease of operation and welding with low-heat input.

Basic-coated versions are also available to suit other critical applications.

The range of basic-coatings offers controlled percentage delta ferrite, guaranteed performance and perfect results.

Hard-facing problems? Philips electrodes make them easy to face

Case History: A major steel plant finds that vital cobalt-based electrodes are getting much too expensive...Philips provides a substitute at just **one-third** the cost with **double** the service life.

Surfacing 'tong pins' (for lifting hot steel billets) was a critical job. But the costly cobalt-based electrodes had to be replaced with a more economical substitute. The steel plant approached Philips with the problem...

After intensive development work, the Philips team produced a C-Cr-Ni-Co-Mo alloy that matched high-cobalt alloys in hardness characteristics at elevated temperatures. The result: PHILIPS 550. It cost two-thirds less and increased service life by as much as 1500 tonnes of ingot lifted!

PHILIPS 550 is now part of the Philips standard range and in wide demand for surfacing components.

Ready today for tomorrow's welding challenges

You name the application and Philips can offer an electrode to match. Philips electrodes will continue to be the best answers to every future need. Rightly so, as Philips has access to the world's latest welding technology—be it consumables or equipment.

Philips engineers have done the 'impossible' in solving welding problems, again and again, setting an unmatched record in technical services. Through the last three and a half decades, Philips has made contributions of worldwide significance. And the quest goes on incessantly..

So when you think welding, think PHILIPS. Count on PHILIPS to make the impossible—possible for you.

For other hard-facing applications:

Philips Electrode	Hardness at R. Temperature in VHN
PH 250R	250–350
PH 250	250–300
PH 375	425–500
PH MN	250–550
PH MN(Spl)	250–550
PH 375 Ni	250–400
PH CSA	180–200
PH 600	550–650
PH 600B	550–650
PH 450	400–450
PH 410	300–350
PH 575	550–650

Yes, rush me more information on Philips Electrodes

Name: _____

Designation: _____

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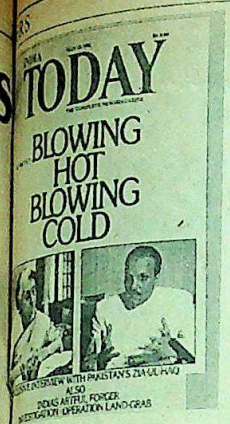

S SIGNS

reading "Double-talk (May 15) I realised the obvious Pakistan will not sign a no-war then would Zia-ul Haq raise the gy and keep the country behind

D.R. Gulati

g from the way Pakistan is arm- digging up the Kashmir issue, s no-war pact sounds ominously er "Hindi-Chini bhai bhai".

Ramanand Sharma

FEUD

ading the cover story one sees Gandhi vs Gandhi" (April 30) going to spread all over the d to be fair, one must admit that s ample grounds for grievance. oyalists have been put into cold his five-point programme has d. How long could she remain

Ashok Kumar Pandey

agazine seems to have become a al with one Gandhi after the g the cover. Now what must did do to merit this treatment?

Sudhir Malhotra

r story lacked intelligent eva- in-depth study. The human been ignored completely and e article ended up one-sided.

Jyotirmaya Sharma

pity that INDIA TODAY gave so ence to Maneka Gandhi. Who political background or stand- got? What can she do for the ben masses? The article was a e of making a nonentity a

K.I. Reghy

ding the cover story and then Royal" (April 30) one comes to n that we have abolished dynas- tic rule only in name. The tradition of royalty continues. Perhaps it would be more honest if we changed our system of government to a monarchy. That would be true to our history and our inclinations.

Ahmedabad *J.V. Venkatesh Murthy*

■ The opinion poll showed "Advantage, Maneka" because the young widow is riding on a wave of spontaneous sympathy. But this advantage will make no difference at election time as then votes are given only on the strength of Mrs Gandhi's name.

New Delhi *Pramod Sharma*

DIVIDED OPINION

According to the results of the opinion poll ("Subtle Shifts", April 30) 70 per cent say that things are going badly for the country, 75 per cent feel that corruption is on the increase, 40 per cent think that law and order has worsened and only 24 per cent view the judiciary as unthreatened. And yet 60 per cent of the interviewees are satisfied with Mrs Gandhi. Do these people then feel that the prime minister has nothing to do with all the areas that they are dissatisfied about?

Raipur *A.K. Agarwal*

■ Considering that the people interviewed were dissatisfied with everything in the country and yet a majority still support Mrs Gandhi, it would seem that they mistook IMRB for the IB.

Bombivili *R.R. Shanbag*

POPULAR METHOD

The article "Intrument Of Success" (April 30) mentions that laparoscopic sterilisation is just a passing phase. As a laparoscopic surgeon, with more than 45,000 operations to my credit in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, I can safely say that this is untrue. This method is safe, almost painless and very quick. Patients need, at the most, only 24 hours to recover from it. In fact laparoscopic sterilisations are so popular that we find that motivation and incentives are unnecessary.

Ahmedabad *Dr Amar Motivala*

CASH AND CARRY

While glibly conferring on West Bengal the "dubious distinction" of the record number of dacoities in "Asking For Trouble" (April 30) the author should not have overlooked the fact that unlike in any other state the bank employees here risked their own lives to catch the dacoits.

Kulti *Buddha Deb Chattopadhyay*

■ As a person who has been investigating bank hold-ups and frauds on behalf of nationalised insurers for the last 30 years, it

Readership Survey

Dear Reader,

Some of you may recall an IMRB-INDIA TODAY questionnaire in the April 15, '82 issue, inviting information about you and your interests and seeking your views on INDIA TODAY.

We are pleased to inform you that the response to this questionnaire has been overwhelming. I am personally grateful to all those who spent the time and took the interest to reply. We assure you your response will go a long way in making INDIA TODAY better suited to meet your needs and interests.

Thanking you,

Aroon Purie
Editor

INDIA TODAY
THE COMPLETE NEWSMAGAZINE

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is quite clear to me that the present safety measures are grossly inadequate. One of the basic points that have been overlooked is that usually cash, in excess of what is required or permissible, is allowed to remain in the banks. If there is always cash for the taking bank robberies cannot be controlled, and employees connivance cannot be ruled out. Also the entire planning of the banks has to be altered with greater use of TV cameras, alarms and regular security. What is required is a more imaginative and radical approach to the problem rather than the same old methods.

Bombay *Rashmi H. Desai*

MISPLACED WORRY

The perspective on defence, "Assessing The Dangers" (April 30) was excellent, as was the accompanying cartoon. India has suffered defeat at the hands of invaders over the ages because of grave misjudgement and it seems that this pattern is unchanged. This explains the unison of opinion in this country that Pakistan is our chief enemy along with the US even though the USSR has marched into Afghanistan and brought superpower strength into our backyard. This along with the many naval bases that the Soviets have in the Indian Ocean should make us stop quaking at the mention of Pakistan which is one-fourth our size and deal realistically with the creeping Soviet might.

Calcutta *Mihir Bain*

COMPLICATED LANGUAGE

B.G. Verghese's article, "The Communication Chasm" (April 30) is based on a lecture by C.G.K. Reddy of the Research Institute for Newspaper Development, Madras. Verghese, like Reddy, wrongly claims that "all Indian languages . . . are phonetic (sic)". All languages are "phonetic", but only a few capture this in their writing systems. Spanish, Russian and Vedic Sanskrit do this very well; modern Indian languages do not have particularly *phonemic* scripts, nor do they need them. Verghese also expresses the layman's gut feeling that languages can (indeed, have to) be "made attractive" to captive speaker populations. Nowhere in the world has such an experiment succeeded—successfully "planned" languages are only naturally evolving link languages given official importance. It is also naive to expect simplistic technical gimmicks like Reddy's unwieldly transliteration system to solve what is actually a very complex socio-political problem, and to think that linguistic solutions which include "the masses" can come without major socio-political change.

Language is a complex, sensitive issue and one better left to experienced specialists than to well-meaning but [illegible] journalists.

New Delhi *Peggy*

FABRIC OF PROGRESS

Pranab Mukherjee's comm[illegible] "Genie In The Bottle" (April 30) that [illegible] nization of textile industries would [illegible] loss of jobs for many is erroneous. [illegible] Indian textile industry had been mod[illegible] then cloth could have been produc[illegible] per and there would have been an in[illegible] demand resulting in optimum pr[illegible] and maximisation of profit.

Varanasi *Saurab*

EXAGGERATED CASES

The statement in your artic[illegible] room Brawl" (May 15) about the fee[illegible] charged by senior advocates for spe[illegible] petitions in the Supreme Court on a[illegible] days is, as far as I am concerned, [illegible] The reference to the number of [illegible] handled on a single day is exagger[illegible] does not take into account matters [illegible] of charge in deserving cases.

It is unfortunate that your co[illegible] dent has indulged in generalisations [illegible] checking his facts. He is most wel[illegible] come to my chambers to find out [illegible] true position is. Rest assured there [illegible] claim of privilege against disclosu[illegible] relevant matter.

New Delhi *Soli*

WHO'S LEFT?

How amusing to see David S[illegible] that orphaned Maoist, come hom[illegible] on the pages of INDIA TODAY ("So[illegible] War", April 15). Western leaders [illegible] Mrs Gandhi and her foreign poli[illegible] do not look upon her as dumb. If [illegible] guilty of despising Indians, it is [illegible] pseudo-leftists like Selbourne wh[illegible] compunctions about trotting out [illegible] garbage for an Indian public [illegible] daring to subject their western aud[illegible] similar ordeal.

London *Dr Pro[illegible]*

WRONG PASSAGE

In "Passage To England" (M[illegible] is mentioned that Dr Narayana [illegible] the National Centre for the Perfo[illegible] Bombay, was in London for the [illegible] the exhibition 'In The Images of [illegible] information is incorrect and D[illegible] confirms this. Lala Aditya Nara[illegible] National Museum, Delhi, was [illegible] for the packaging of this [illegible] in London for the inaugura[illegible]

New Delhi *P[illegible]*

The error is regretted.

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...Ash: A Chaotic Crunch
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...al Feature
...da Marga: Dance Of Death
...Feature
...stics: Athletic Extravaganza
...Column
...Of Confidence by B.G. Verghese
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...p Victims: Held To Ransom
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...aj Quartet: Recasting A Jewel
...'s Gamble
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...y: Foul Play
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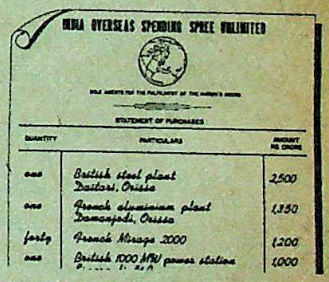
BY RAGHU RAI

COVER STORY: While the Government-run Doordarshan is poised for a massive expansion in terms of hardware, it sadly lacks the vital accompanying software to make it a power-packed medium. Beginning with ad hoc and haphazard policies, shoddy administration and a lack of specialised talent, Doordarshan to many has come to mean boredom. An in-depth report on the mess in TV. **Page: 26**

LETTER FROM WASHINGTON: In a searching and candid interview, Mrs Indira Gandhi, considered a tough customer and a geopolitical *femme fatale* by most in the Western press, gives clear and concrete ideas of her feelings towards superpowers, particularly America, Indo-Pak relations and the global arms and nuclear race, in the context of India. **Page: 12**

CURRENT EVENTS: As election fever reached its peak in the four states of Kerala, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana, last fortnight, the ruling Congress(I) projected particularly high stakes for the 607 Assembly and seven Lok Sabha seats. With an unprecedented 3,340 candidates in the fray, the ruling party has made no effort to hide the immense importance it attaches to the forthcoming contest to be held on May 19. An on-the-spot report from these states and key constituencies with a brief analysis. **Page: 34**

ECONOMY AND INDUSTRY: India has all of a sudden become prime hunting ground for foreigners looking for business prospects. And India in turn is going in for a massive shopping spree—the biggest in its history. From steel plants to aircraft and power stations to cars, the deals already contracted add up to a staggering Rs 7,000 crore with much more in the offing. An in-depth report. **Page: 84**



INDIA OVERSEAS SPENDING SPREE UNLIMITED

STATEMENT OF PURCHASES

QUANTITY	PARTICULARS	AMOUNT RS CRORE
one	British steel plant Daitari, Orissa	2,500
one	French aluminium plant Damanjodi, Orissa	1,350
forty	French Mirage 2000	1,200
one	British 1000 MW power station	1,000

INVESTIGATION: In spite of the massive anti-dacoity drive operating in the dacoit infested areas of Uttar Pradesh, the region seems relatively unaffected by the campaign. Kidnapping has become the order of the day but official figures belie the truth. The ransoms collected vary from Rs 2,000 to Rs 3 lakh. An insight into the *modus operandi*. **Page: 128**

CINEMA: It is by far the most expensive television venture ever shot in India. Filmed at the startling cost of Rs 9.9 crore, and bringing in a cast of 70-odd British actors and actresses, Granada Television's serial, *The Jewel in the Crown*, currently being shot in Simla, seems something of a major coup after Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi*. A behind-the-scene look. **Page: 132**

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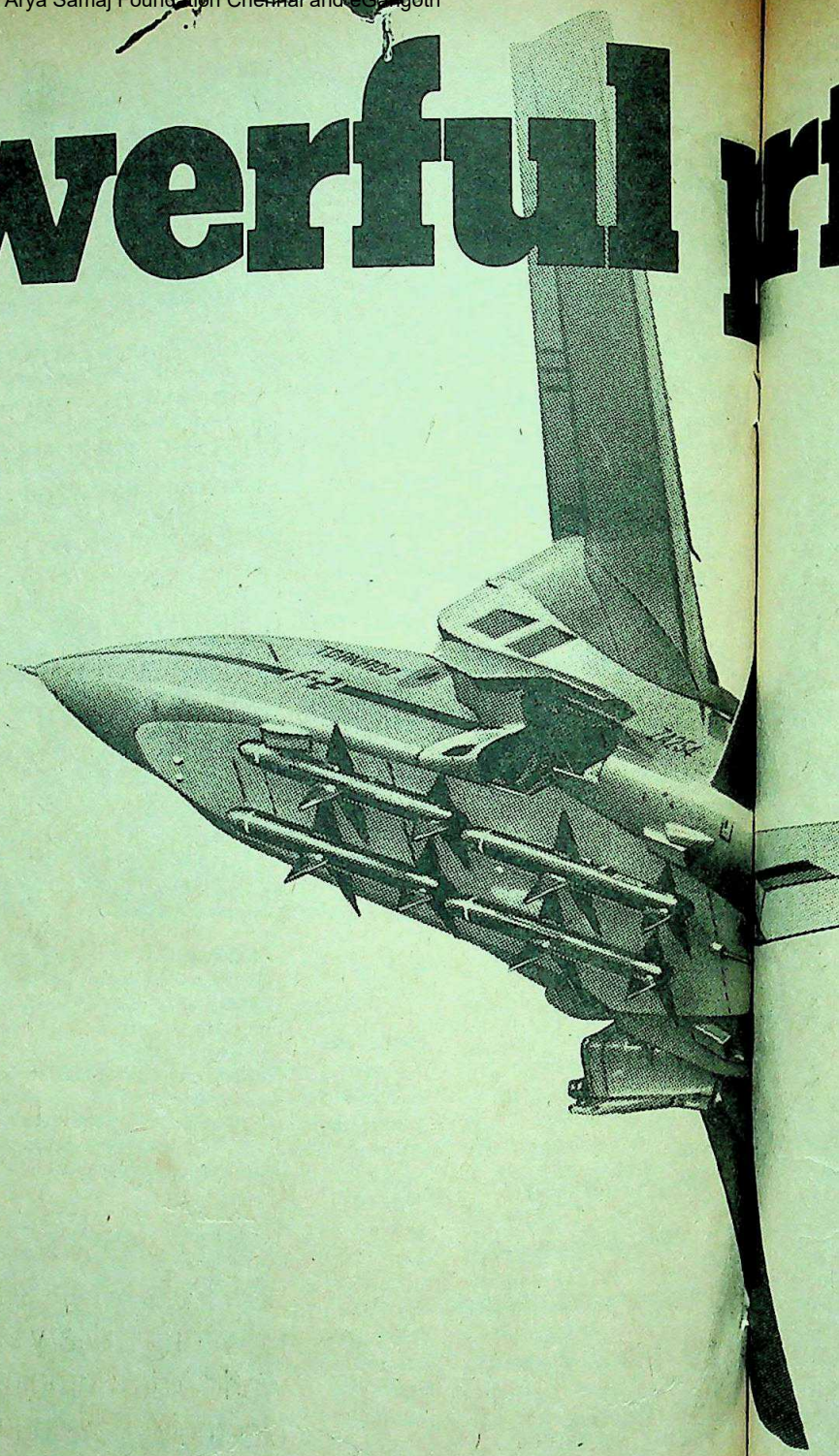
Powerful



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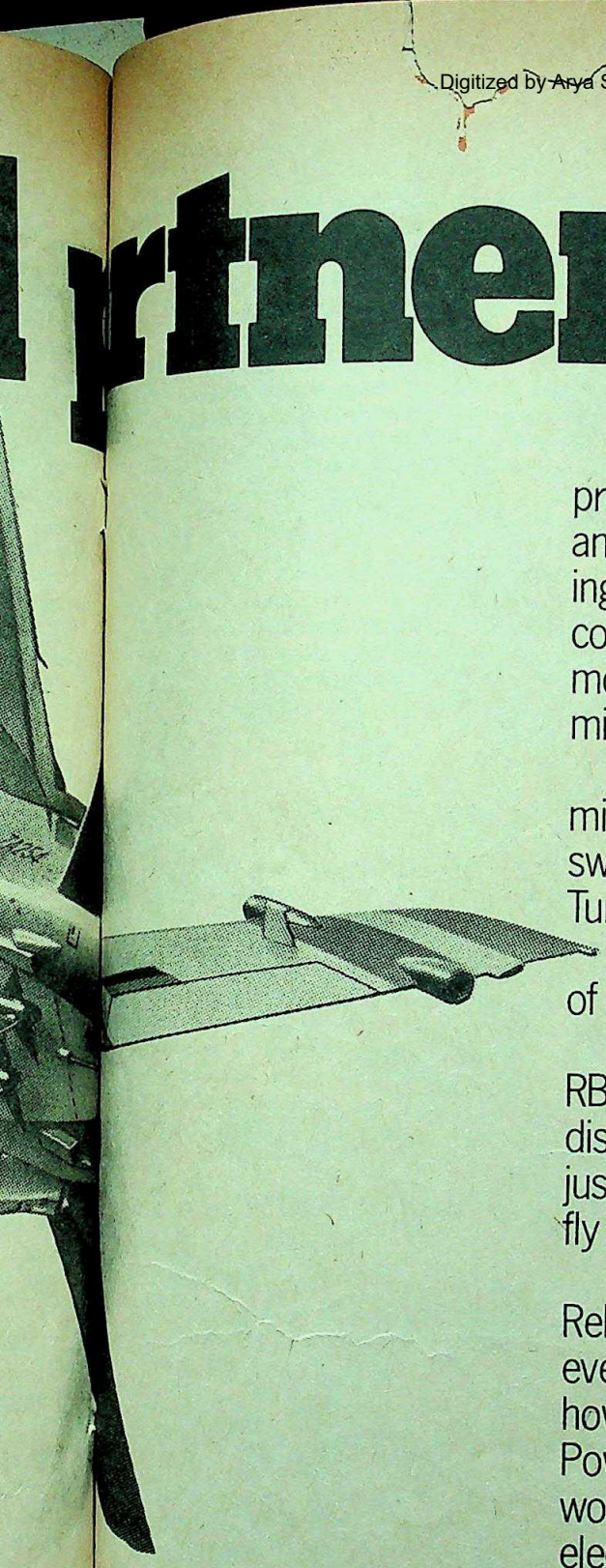

Rolls-Royce has more collaborative programmes around the world than any other aero engine manufacturer. Working together with companies in many countries to develop and produce ever more efficient engines for commercial and military use.

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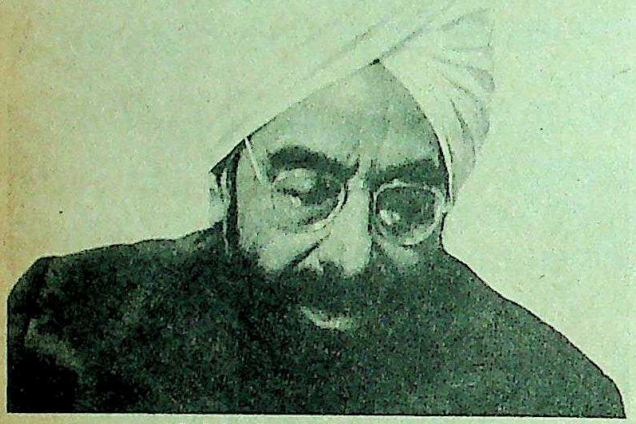
APPREHENSION IN MIZORAM

CLOSE on the heels of intelligence reports that exiled Mizo National Front (MNF) president Laldenga is planning to move from West Germany to Dacca soon to supervise operations comes information that MNF cadres have been mobilised for "increased hostility". Last fortnight, Union Minister of State for Home, Nihar Ranjan Lasker said in Silchar that there was no news of the MNF regrouping. But growing attacks on vehicles moving down Mizoram's lifeline to the outside world, the Lunglei-Aizawl-Silchar road, have prompted Mizoram's deputy director, supply and transport, to order all government vehicles to move in convoys under police and army protection. Bus services from Silchar to Aizawl have been halted on Saturdays and Sundays. Private vehicles can join the convoys with prior notice. Intelligence authorities in Aizawl apprehend a stepping up of guerrilla attacks on traffic along this vital route, coupled with hit and run attacks within the union territory. More army units have also been ordered into Mizoram.

BHAWAN SINGH



Zail Singh: pacifying mission

GIANI TO TACKLE KHALISTAN ISSUE

HOME Minister Giani Zail Singh is being dispatched to Britain and the US on May 20 to make a whirlwind tour of these two countries. According to sources, he will meet Khalistan leaders and try to persuade them not to indulge in anti-national activities. It is learnt on authority that the Giani would also try to ascertain how these Khalistan leaders are being financed. More important, he will confer with senior leaders in both these countries and seek their support for curbing such activities against India from their soils. Zail Singh is also expected to drop broad hints that if such activities are allowed they will sour India's ties with these countries.

WARY OF VELAYATI

THOUGH the recent visit of Iranian Foreign Minister, Dr Akbar Ali Velayati, was adequately covered by the media, it did miss out on one engagement that Velayati failed to keep. According to his original itinerary, Velayati was scheduled to visit Lucknow for a day but the trip was cancelled at the last minute and other engagements substituted. The official reason for the cancellation was that Velayati had been informed by the Indian Government that intelligence reports indicated that a huge demonstration was being planned in Lucknow for his visit which could lead to trouble.

Velayati agreed to cancel the trip but according to s
the real reason was that the Indian Government was i
Velayati's ill-advised statement that one of his aims d
visit was to take a look at the welfare of Muslim mino
India. Accordingly, the demonstration bogey was raised to
Velayati from having his scheduled talks with Muslim le
Lucknow.

A PLACE FOR ANTONY

DESPITE repeated denials, A.K. Antony is about to
flock of supporters to the Congress(I). The merger of
Congresses in Kerala has been worked out and the Con
High Command has promised the Kerala Pradesh C
Committee-I (KPCC-I) presidentship on a platter to
Karunakaran's present rubber stamp KPCC (I) presiden
Chandy has been shifted to Pondicherry as the governor
way for Antony, but K.G. Adiyodi, a dissident member
been denied a party ticket in the coming election to
Assembly has staked his claim to KPCC (I) presidents
merger is to take place within a month after the election

CELLULOID MANIFESTO

N.T. Rama Rao: building the party machine

AS ELECTIONS
Andhra Pradesh
tive Assembly are unli
held earlier than sch
February next year, N
Rao, who has laun
Telugu Desam Party,
ing to fill in time by
film. Titled *Chanda Sh*
(The Iron Man), the
made by his own p
company is about Ra
and values. Although
to be a social film, its
scheduled for Sankra
January) next year, ju
the election.

Meanwhile his
mobilising youth
planning to hold
panchayat samiti-level elections to the party organis
the next convention at Tirupati slated for May 28. El
the district- and state-level committees are to be complete

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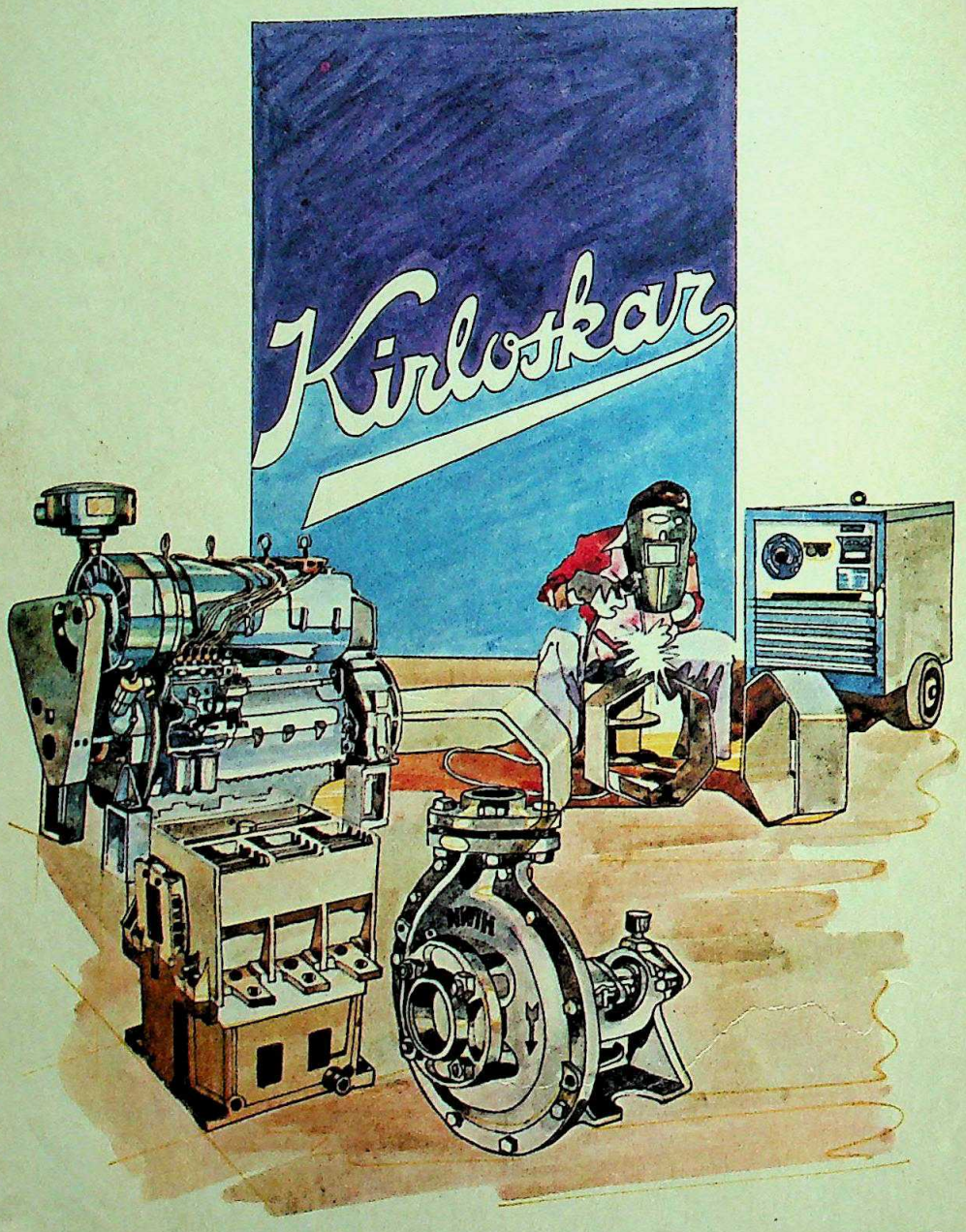

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very Indian has a right to aspire for the office of prime ministership. I condemn se who oppose this right.

—*Devraj Urs in* Weekend Review

cannot understand why the Government which has met all my expenses in India last six years should now try to act funny. It can be a little more graceful...

—*President of the outlawed Mizo National Front, Laldenga in* Sunday

am a timid person... I think ten times before accepting a challenge.

—*Babasaheb Bhosale at a foundation-stone laying ceremony in Pune*

he way our editors and distinguished journalists groan, fret, complain and when some one in the Government... attacks the press, you might think that tional newspapers were run by tender-hearted young ladies whose modesty is outraged.

—*Abu Abraham in* Debonair

ngress(I) men are worms of gutter who thrive in filth.

—*Sheikh Abdullah addressing a labour rally in Srinagar*

here is one word that has done the worst damage to Indian political thinking e word 'socialism'.

—*M.V. Kamath in the* Indian Express

e Maratha lobby (in Maharashtra) is like ulay's dynamism—it's mythical.

C. Nadkarni in The Illustrated Weekly of India

SUDHIR DAR in THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

u punished Mrs Gandhi in 1977 and gave ance. You punished us in 1980 and we are nt. Therefore please give us another chance.

Behari Vajpayee's campaign plea in Rohtak

beginning to tire of (my) false image. I d with sex, bored with religion and can y little alcohol. The only benefit I have from painting myself in lurid colours is desirable humbugs avoid me.

—*Khushwant Singh in* Current

I were to be stable and always *propah*, I t be a poet. I'd be a... Julie Andrews. Even drews is showing her tits these days.

—*Poet and author Pritish Nandy in* Probe

en one writes, there is no sex. It's a matter of dedication.

—*Punjabi poetess Amrita Pritam in the* Express Magazine

not collecting male scalps. I'm not a woman who has power over men. A is all myth... I have lots of friends, but I'm not this great come-on woman.

—*Film star Zeenat Aman in* Stardust

beginning to think the knee-jerk reaction of seeing a foreign hand everywhere ension of the national addiction to invest all things foreign with a superior even when it comes to getting up a riot or exposing a fraud like Antulay.

—*S. Mulgaonkar in the* Indian Express

yana had the dubious distinction of being the birth place of the phenomenon ns and *gaya rams*. Now it has become the pace-setter of what looks like a collapse of party discipline.

—*Editorial comment in* The Times Of India

change the future. Your future, your children's future. Your children's future.

ss(I) campaign advertisement in West Bengal, issued by Shrikant Verma, MP

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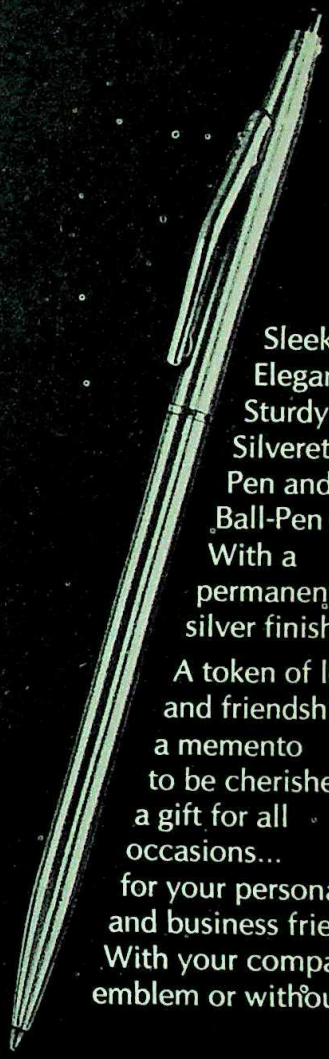

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Nobody's Stooge

AFTER Congressman Lester Wolff, head of a congressional delegation, met her in Delhi about two years ago, he remarked in private: "That woman is something else. She can charm the pants off you." As former chairman of the powerful house foreign relations subcommittee he had been briefed by his staff to expect a stiff dowager empress who would address him in stentorian tones. To his utter surprise the veteran legislator discovered that Prime Minister Mrs Gandhi was gentle and gracious in demeanour, a patient listener and even solicitous of a bad case of Delhi belly that Wolff had developed on his trip. Wolff came back a "Mrs G" fan.

President Reagan had also been advised before his meeting with Mrs Gandhi in Cancun that he should expect a tough customer, a geopolitical *femme fatale*. American policy makers still remembered Mrs Gandhi's 1971 visit to Washington when she cold-shouldered Nixon and meted out lethal doses of the silent treatment to the American President's coterie. But Reagan's trepidation evaporated within minutes after he met her. She did not press him on the Pakistan arms issue or on Tarapur. Reagan would later tell his advisers in private that Mrs Gandhi had been given a bum rap—that she was not the monster people portrayed her to be.

Insights: The days preceding an interview with Mrs Gandhi are crammed with "insights" about her behaviour and deportment offered freely by people who have read Khushwant Singh and Dom Moraes. Free-booting armchair analysts—Indiraphiles and Indiraphobes alike—join in the fray with dizzying accounts of Mrs Gandhi's "aloofness", her "mercurial temperament", her proclivity for "pedantic behaviour", her "churlishness". It's like a flourish of disharmonious cacophony preceding a first audience.

What is immediately striking about Mrs Gandhi is her supreme composure. She looks not as if she has stepped out of a battering political whirlwind but out of a yogic *asana*. She is waiting at her desk, clad in a summery blue and white sari, right on time for the appointment. Outside her modest Parliament House office, a verandah away, some 60 members of Parliament including Union Industry Minister N.D. Tiwari, are waiting in the air-conditioned VIP lounge.

But for a brief smile and a nod there is no other formal greeting. Her desk is unlittered but for a few scraps of paper and some notes she wants to use for the interview. She gives no hint that there is time for small talk, even an exchange of pleasantries to help break the ice before the discussion can start. She waits—patiently, expectantly—for the first question. Within minutes she has warmed up to the theme of her answers. Her demeanour makes it clear that this is no press conference where a "performance" is required. It is a free-ranging discussion during which she will make blunt responses to blunt questions.

At age 64, Mrs Gandhi is a remarkably young-looking woman, fresh complexioned and without wrinkles. She is almost petite. She is pretty in a 'Thatcheresque' kind of way. In private, she does not display the dour-faced impatience that she does in p... And she carries an imperious presence that seems to comma... reverential attitude from those around her. But she sparkles comes to life when she is asked questions presumably not to... liking. She seems almost eager to welcome such questions enjoys being feisty in response.

Her language is precise. And it becomes obvious to the l... that when she is vague or imprecise she is doing it deliberat... order to drive home a subtle point or to avoid being o... accusatory about an institution or individual. Hence her refer... to "they" when she means the Western countries, or "... countries" or her use of the passive voice in articulating sen... such as "similar situations have arisen where..."

Clear Thinking: Mrs Gandhi does not grope for w... ces. In her clipped, conventish English accent in which one often detect tones of Oxford, her delivery is rapid and sm... She does not stutter. Her thoughts are clear and forceful. S... sometimes pause for a few seconds to collect a thought. I... think she has finished a... on to the next question s... ignore it and start from w... she had paused. Once s... finished she will apologi... the interruption, repeat... earlier question and beg... new. "Am I going too fa... you?" she asked at one... half smiling. At another... she insisted on going ba... discussion on economic l... lisation, pulled out a n... sheet and beamed as s... out India's economic g... ments since 1980.

Mrs Gandhi wants to take concrete steps to improve relations with the US but remains strongly suspicious about US motives on the subcontinent. Her olive branch for America still hides behind it several barbs that she reserves the right to fire.

The discussion focused almost entirely on Indo-US re... in the context of world developments. Mrs Gandhi wants t... concrete steps to improve relations with the US but re... strongly suspicious about US motives on the subcontinent... she remains deeply disturbed and apprehensive about Pak... arms build-up—an issue on which she will not compromi... olive branch for America still hides behind it several barb... she reserves the right to fire. If she appears unrelentingly h... towards Pakistan it is partly because she sees "double stan... applied by the US in the subcontinent on several issues inc... the nuclear controversy.

She will answer hard questions with rhetorical questi... her own. When asked whether her quiet diplomacy had a... any results in terms of evicting the Soviets from Afghan... immediately shot back, her voice rising: "Have they (the... produced any results with all their hue and cry?" Mrs G... leaves little doubt that in matters of foreign policy she is n... element. Throughout the interview her attention was unfli... total. She was not disturbed by a single phone call or messag...

Last month, Mrs Gandhi met INDIA TODAY*'s Washington C... pondent* INDERJIT BADHWAR *during his visit to India. The interv... place during a period of stormy political weather swirling about... the Maneka feud, her party's electoral goof-ups in Haryana, ... ties in Himachal and arch foe H.N. Bahuguna looming like a p... yeti in the Himalaya. Extracts from the interview by arrang... with Jack Anderson in whose syndicated column it also appear...*

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...hat do you intend to achieve in your ...isit to America?

...here are certain misunderstandings ...but they are fortunately in a few ...They arise not out of bilateral ... but from America's global ... Such a big military and economic ...sometimes finds it difficult to ... the problems... of poorer ... We've always wanted good ...with the US. Good relations are ...for the US too, because we are too ...untry to be wished away.

...u have made several overtures ...st year for better relations with the ... you felt that the US has rebuffed

...desire friendship not just with the ...with all countries. I took the ...to establish normal relations with ...Pakistan at the peak of hostility. ...is to increase friendship where it ...te it where it doesn't, and soften ...here there is hostility.

realise that the rebels are getting highly sophisticated arms. This was earlier being denied. Now it has been admitted and it is more widespread. The Afghan minister who was here said that we can ask Soviet troops to withdraw only when outside help is withdrawn.

Q. ***But what has your quiet pressure and diplomacy with the Soviets achieved with regard to withdrawal of troops?***

A. Have they (the West) produced any results with all their hue and cry? When the Soviet Union felt the world was combining against them it was not natural or realistic to expect them to be frightened away. If at that moment the Soviets had been assured that nobody wants any Western presence in Afghanistan there would have been a better chance of something happening.

Q. ***No matter what the realities you are still regarded in the United States as being a Soviet stooge, a Soviet puppet.***

A. The Soviets have voted with us (in world forums) and not we with them. On many other items, like economic ones, the Soviets are often with us. (Early during our development) when we wanted to build a steel plant in the state sector we asked the US for help and the US said no. Only then did we go to the Soviet Union. Similarly (when the US refused to assist in oil exploration) we went to Rumania. It is false to call us dependent or stooges. We're first Indians and Indian interests come first.

Q. ***While you criticise US arms aid to Pakistan, you are criticised in the West for taking billions of dollars in arms aid from the Soviets.***

A. But ours are purchases from the Soviet Union, not concessions. Whether on defence or on other things, the Soviet Union has stood by us in times of difficulty. But we have diversified our defence buying... we are building our own indigenous production capability so that we do not have to depend on any single source.

Q. ***If Pakistan explodes a nuclear weapon will there be a nuclear arms race on the subcontinent?***

A. We have clearly stated that our nuclear development is for economic development purposes. (The Pakistanis) are going in for a bomb and America has accepted this situation. They have always had a double standard with us on this point.

Q. ***Do you appreciate the Soviet danger to Pakistan? The Americans say you should make a bold move as openly declaring that a secure Pakistan is in India's interest and that any outside threat to Pakistan is also a threat to India's security.***

A. But Pakistan has itself said that there is no danger to them from the Soviets. They have told the Soviets themselves that American arms will not be used against the Soviets or Afghanistan.

Q. ***Why is arms aid to Pakistan more ominous now than before?***

A. This is not the first time that the US has given arms. In the past the US has assured us that the arms would not be used against us. This time the US is not prepared to give this assurance. The US is on the record saying that the guns can be turned in any direction.

Q. ***But the other view is that Pakistan feels insecure, that it is like a mouse living next to the Indian elephant that can turn over in its sleep and crush the mouse.***

A. Who in Pakistan is the mouse? Are people in Pakistan benefiting in any way (from the arms)? If there is war, no matter who wins or who loses, officers and men are killed. We are not so callous. We are devoting all our time to economic development, but this diverts our resources.

Q. ***Why does this not filter back to the American press?***

A. The American press raised a hue and cry about (the treatment being given) to the Bhutto ladies? The Bhutto ladies are no friends of mine at all but (the Americans) shut their eyes in some situations.

Q. ***There is a feeling in the US that the***

Mrs Gandhi: "We're first Indians and Indian interests come first"

...u have been criticised for not being ...nough in your condemnation of the ...sion of Afghanistan...

...e, we have not been as vociferous. ...oesn't mean we haven't stated it ...hat view applies to all countries. ...e Western countries speak up in ...rations but remain silent in others. ...uations have arisen where other ...ave interfered in Latin America, ...Africa but there is no similar hue

...re you told the Soviets directly of ...sion?

...We are against all foreign ...e, militarily or through ... We made this clear regarding ...n privately to Soviet leaders and ...ly... we happen to be closer to the ...han others. They were part of our ...struggle, they have found ...t here and they've not had an ...y. At the same time one has to

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assurances of peaceful co-existence given to Pakistan by Morarji Desai during the Janata regime were more credible to the Pakistanis. The Pakistanis also seem to have stolen the thunder on the no-war pact.

A. The no-war pact offer was made by my father in 1949, then by Mr Shastri and then by me during the Simla accords. In Simla it was not mentioned specifically—we decided to avoid the words on Mr Bhutto's request—but the result was the same, that all disputes will be decided peacefully and bilaterally... I've now offered them something deeper and more enduring and comprehensive—a treaty of friendship and cooperation.

Q. ***But why do you consider arms aid to Pakistan a more serious matter than before?***

A. We suddenly find ourselves a decade behind (in weaponry). We've doubted (Pakistan's) seriousness (about the no-war pact) because of their talk about India even where it is not relevant during the discussions taking place.

Q. ***Are you concerned about the global arms race? What pressures does it put on you?***

A. It puts tremendous pressures on developing countries which to a lesser or greater degree face grave economic problems. It distorts priorities where death dealing takes precedence over life enhancement. As Buckminster Fuller said, "Let us turn from weaponry to livingry."

Q. ***Is there a trend toward economic liberalisation and increased trade with the West? Is this a sudden shift in policy?***

A. Your generation cannot imagine what we have seen during and after Independence. With our population there was a minute section that was rich, a minute section in the middle class while 95 per cent lived in utter misery and privation... in this situation either we increased Indian industries or purchased from abroad. Yes, some of the rich have grown richer... but a whole range of new entrepreneurs has also arisen a huge middle class that didn't exist before... in the beginning we had to be more strict (regarding economic controls) but as we have grown stronger we are liberalising. We're now even admitting foreign capital. It's a challenge and we can meet it. Now we're allowing foreign capital in previously forbidden areas not because Westerners want us to but because we want to accelerate our own growth without compromising self-reliance. At the same time we need more trade and fewer barriers from the US.

Q. ***How do you feel about India's economic performance?***

A. In two years since we've come back we've reversed the negative growth rates. There was a 4.8 per cent decrease when we were out of power. In 19 grew by 7.5 per cent and then by ano per cent. Agriculture increased 15.4 in 1980-81. Negative growth rate in was reversed and converted to 4 per 1980-81 and in January 1982 it reach cent. In many industries such as c steel, production in 1982 crossed ear levels and our petroleum pro doubled. Our main task was infla bring it down was a very co deliberate policy, our number one ai 23 per cent we brought it down to cent in 1980-81 and now it is expect no more than 1.7 per cent.

Q. ***But to the foreign investor I appears to be a country of bure inefficiency, of controls and licences***

A. We inherited our bure system from the British. And much date. But despite all the obstacles producing people in the IAS who are good job. I'm very dissatisfied w educational system but we're still pr people with value to the US. I know US is actively encouraging and even jobs to people here who have still t their degrees. Their contribution technological and electronics fields not been assessed.

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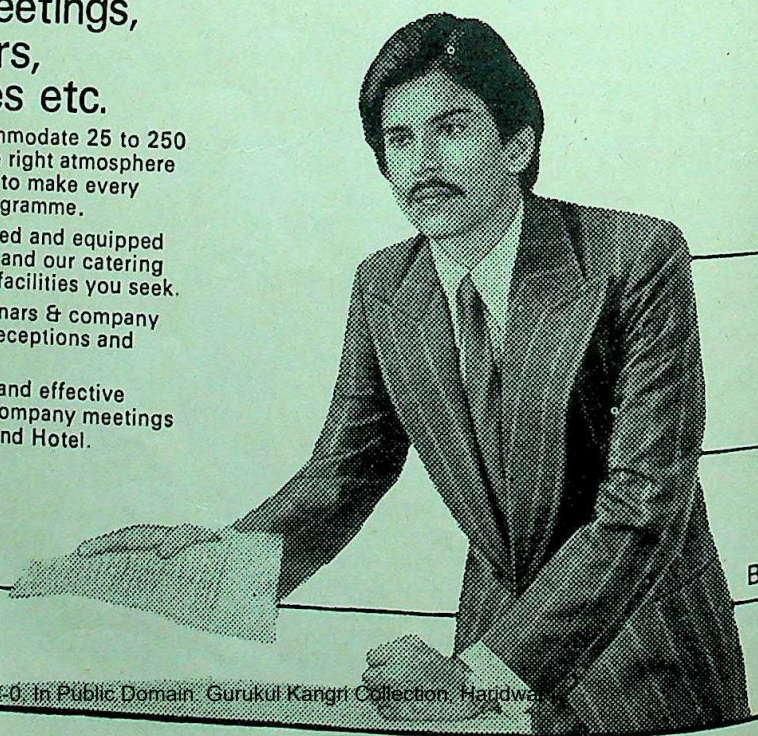

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rvest Of Hatred

AB once an island of harmony and erily. Today, the state of the green ition is stained with the blood d in communal violence. Using tobacco as lethal missiles, miscreants with political ve succeeded in sowing the seeds among Hindus and Sikhs in The communal tragedy, now s fourth tense week, began on hen two bleeding cow heads were ront of a temple in Amrit- two persons have died, een arrested and property crore has been razed and The streets of Amritsar, Abha and other towns mptied by curfew orders. s of the storm were even Delhi when north Delhi and south Delhi temples d.

ably, in a country noto- tinderbox society, com- ve lost no time in taking by some of the more ctions of the media. In Akali-controlled daily a played up the attacks dwaras. On the other side ricade, the Hindu-domi- *jab Kesari* splashed the secrated temples on its s. While the rash of vio- settled for the moment, sources warn that fana- s in both communities are for war. Said a senior ice official: "With over al and illegal arms in the rocity of the communal be predicted. If we don't nfidence, violence can day."

ations: As social, religious nic opinion-makers put their her to find a solution, the poli- held each other responsible for n. Says Lal Krishna Advani, Janata Party (BJP) general secre- up rivalries within the ruling created this situation. Darbara sponsible for acts of omission and for acts of commission." Adds Singh, Akali Dal ideologue and ence minister: "By not taking st-extremist groups and ignoring e demands of the Sikh com- Mrs Gandhi has encouraged them to use violent methods."

The slide towards the politics of violence and separatism began soon after the Akalis lost to the Congress(I) in the June 1980 assembly elections. Punjab Chief Minister Darbara Singh and Union Home Minister Zail Singh used various Sikh groups as pawns in a private war, and this led to the proliferation of extremist Sikh organisations and rifts in the Congress(I). Says a Sikh scholar of Guru Nanak Dev University: "It is a fight to grab the leadership of the Sikh masses. While the Congress(I) has failed to win them over, it has encouraged the fragmentation of Sikh-dominated parties by deliberately ignoring their insignificant but sensitive demands like the ban on the sale of tobacco which was raised as early as May last year."

Amritsar shop destroyed in the violence: continuing conflict

This studied neglect has led to the birth of many Sikh groupings in the last few months, each more chauvinist than the other. Among them are:

► a faction of the Akali Dal led by Jagdev Singh Talwandi which broke away from its parent in April 1981 and is reportedly backed by Darbara Singh;

► the Dal Khalsa, which earned a new lease of life ;

► the Malkhani Sikh Jatha which led the attack on the Nirankari Samagam in Amritsar in 1979 and is flexing its muscles again;

► the Bhindranwale group, which is gaining influence; and

► bands led by a dozen Nihang Sikhs which supported agitations launched during the present Congress(I) regime.

Agitations: These groupings adopted eye-catching extremist positions and indecisiveness on the part of both the Central and state Governments added fuel to the fire. Between April 1981 and May 1982, over a dozen agitations were launched by Sikh organisations including the Akalis, and the Government sat back and watched. Dal Khalsa leaders were allowed to make anti-national statements. The powers-that-be initially refused to talk to moderate Akali leaders. In May 1981, the Union Home Ministry sent a detailed note on the growing communal tension along with a list of the trouble-makers but the state police—plagued by the community virus—failed to arrest even one.

Even Mrs Gandhi brushed aside warnings of the deteriorating law and order situation received from her own party. Former All India Congress Committee(I) general secretary Kalpnath Rai, in charge of Punjab, wrote to her on April 8, 1981, saying: "I would say that Punjab is on fire today and we must make all efforts to save it. Any delay on our part to tackle this issue or complacency will do great harm to the country as well as to Punjab. Unless it is countered on the political level, it will create more complications and we may face a situation worse than that prevailing in the north-eastern region."

FOR OVER a year, the Central Government tried to pour oil on troubled waters by involving moderate Sikh leaders in dialogues. Mrs Gandhi three times invited Akali leaders to Delhi but didn't concede even one of their 45 demands, including one to give "holy city status" for Amritsar. Similarly, her government sat tight on the Punjab Government's proposal to ban the Dal Khalsa, reportedly due to Zail Singh's intervention. It was only in the wake of last fortnight's incidents that the Dal Khalsa was banned and meat and tobacco shops shifted from the neighbour-

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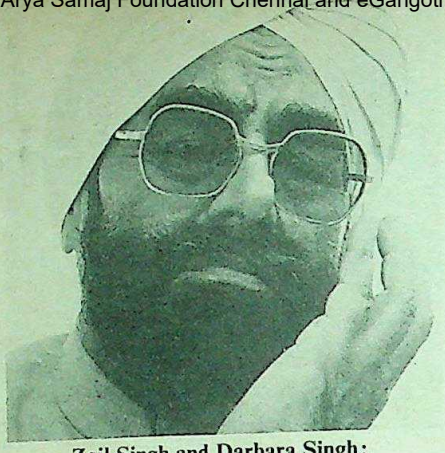
hood of the Golden Temple.

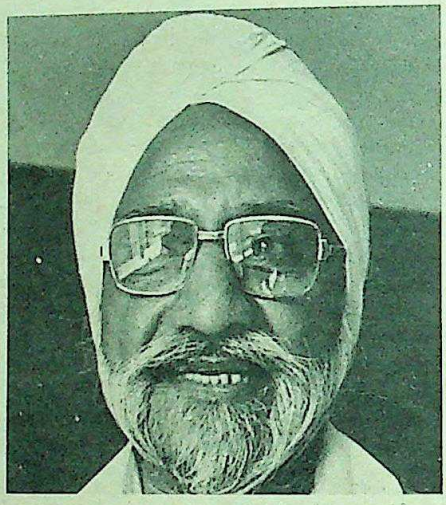
A reading of significant events of the last two years confirms that the Congress(I) allowed the situation to get out of hand:

- April 24, 1980: Nirankari chief Gurbachan Singh is shot dead in New Delhi; only six of the 16 suspects have been arrested so far;
- March 13, 1981: Balbir Singh Sandhu, secretary-general of the National Council of Khalistan, wraps himself in chains and leads a procession in Anandpur Saheb to highlight the plight of the Sikhs in India; no arrests;
- September 9, 1981: Jullundur newspaper owner Lala Jagat Narain is murdered; only two of the seven suspects have been arrested;
- September 29, 1981: Indian Airlines plane is hijacked by Dal Khalsa activists to Pakistan;
- March 16, 1982: Dal Khalsa leaders hold a press conference and declare that they will throw cow heads in front of temples; no arrests are made or preventive measures taken;
- April 26, 1982: cow heads are found in front of temples; culprits still at large.

Explosive Bundle: The most recent incident occurred at 3 a.m. on April 26 when the pujari of a Shiva temple, situated in a congested Amritsar street, found two cow heads wrapped in a cloth. Before he could inform his followers, the police reached the spot and took away the offending bundle. The civic authorities took time to get the situation in hand, and group of yo brandishing lathis and swords, around the Golden Temple and area was strewn with bricks, st lathis.



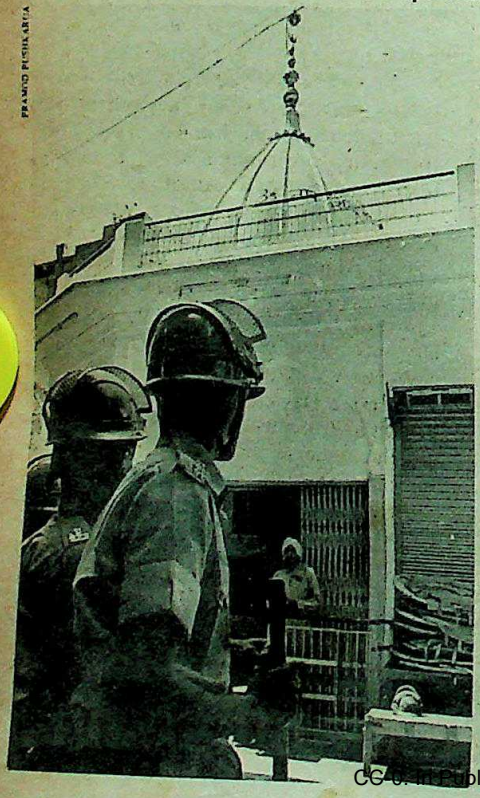
Zail Singh and Darbara Singh: at cross purposes

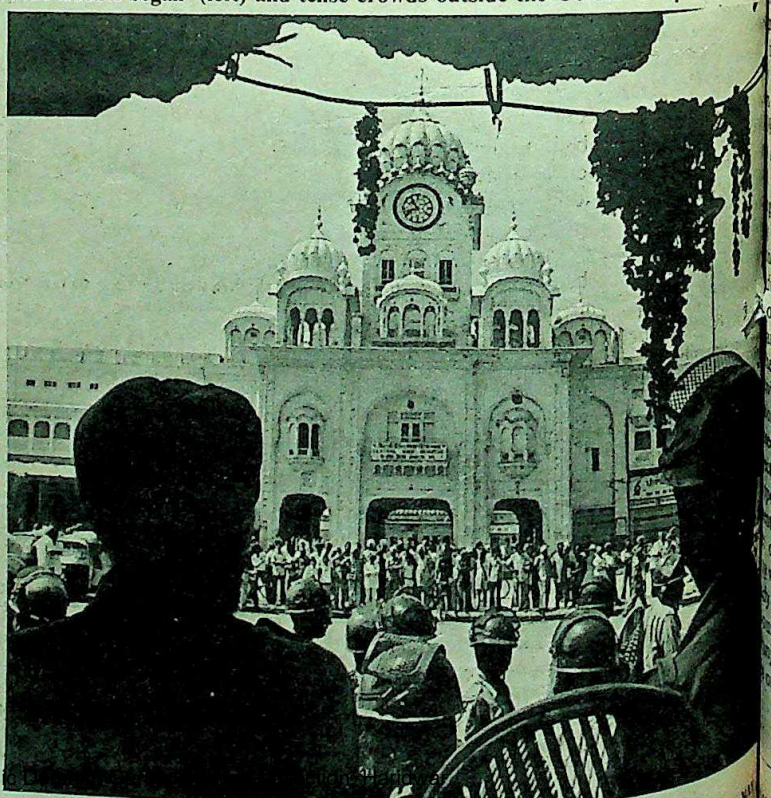


With the failure of the administration to control the Darbara Singh sent Punjab Speaker Brij Bhushan Mehra, Minister Kewal Krishna and Minister Harcharan Singh Ajnale to local police. Meanwhile, the entire put under curfew. The situation wa when Union Industry Minister Na Tiwari and Zail Singh flew to the city and led a 2,000-strong peacema disturbed areas. But before it contained, the communal viole spread to Kapurthala, Patiala an within 48 hours. Curfew was rela two weeks.

Strong Reaction: The Gov seeming apathy forced the Hindu and there are reports that R Swyamsewak Sangh leaders were them to strike back and frustrate t party's peace moves. The feeling a Hindus is so strong that Raghuna Bhatia, a Congress(I) Lok Sabha was beaten up when he went t dominated areas of Amritsar to pac Union Industry Minister Nara Tiwari, who rushed to Amritsar incidents, was given a hostile rec some non-Sikh leaders. It was al that the Congress(I) itself had engi

The Shiva temple where the trouble began (left) and tense crowds outside the Golden Temple





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to influence voters in neigh-
aryana and postpone elections to
njab Assembly seats.
Akalis have maintained a stolid
the problem, preferring also to
from the meeting of the state and
l peace committees. This, of
s not helped, and neither has the
n the part of the police to exploit
ion in down-to-earth material
were accused of looting property
riots. In fact, state Publicity and
n Minister Joginder Paul Pandey
police officers of Nabha to return
ents to their owners.
ntellectuals have come out openly
e tide of Sikh extremism. Said
hevan Singh Umrangal, former
ice-president: "By these actions
ents have not only dishonoured
but have also spoiled the sanctity
ines by taking shelter there after
the crime." Dr Gopal Singh,
the high-powered committee on
asserted: "Nothing will destroy
as a social and religious force in
y and abroad more than these
rurous acts on the part of certain
dividuals who have no social or
se in the community or in the
d who have always been activated
desire to serve foreign masters."
eminar, top Punjab leaders like
former information minister,
shan Singh Surjeet of the
Party of India-Marxist appealed
tion of these elements to preserve
unity.

ring Schemes: The two-year-old
has left its marks on Punjab's
and administration. Although
development projects started
continued undisturbed, no new
could be taken. Over a dozen
proposals, including one
a heavy vehicle unit, are
and various other irrigation,
educational schemes are
ast. The state Government could
over Rs 60 crore of the planned
use the officials had their hands
e communal problem.
il servants are a demoralised lot;
Indian Administrative Service
ed in Punjab: "Each one of us is
rt in the eyes of the people. We
osed to push through the
's decisions but we have become
of attack depending upon the
we belong to." Communal hatred,
administration and an increas-
populace: the fanatics who are
njab to ransom can congratulate
on a job well done.

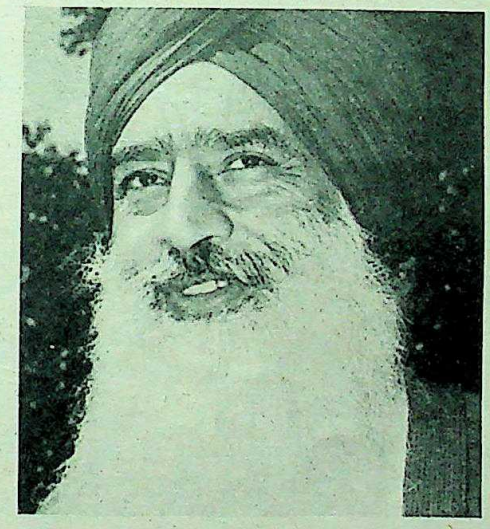
—PRABHU CHAWLA

DAL KHALSA

Extreme Measures

THE COW heads were the last straw. As tension soared in the major cities of Punjab, and communalists emerged from their lairs, the Union Government, in a swift but belated fire-fighting action, issued two notifications last fortnight, banning the Dal Khalsa and the National Council of Khalistan (NCK). The pair of extremist Sikh organisations had owned up to desecrating Hindu shrines in Amritsar and had been responsible for over 200 Hindu-Sikh communal incidents in which 20 people were killed and property worth Rs 5 crore damaged. Punjab Chief Minister Darbara Singh had long been demanding a ban on these organisations—a move as stubbornly opposed by the Centre on the plea that such a ban would give recognition to people who were basically communal fanatics without any mass base.

Even as Darbara Singh and Zail Singh continued with their inelegant sparring, it was becoming frighteningly clear that an organisation that the Congress(I) itself had built up as a rival to the Akalis had been transformed into a monster. The Dal Khalsa was launched on August 6, 1978 in Chandigarh when Zail Singh was the leader of the Opposition to the Akali government and Darbara Singh was the Pradesh Congress Committee(I) chief.



Chauhan and Dhillon: escalating extremism

Active Set-up: The avowed objective was to establish a sovereign Sikh state of Khalistan and fight against anti-Sikh discrimination, the political objective was to eat into the Sikh base of the Akalis. A five-member executive council was in charge: Harsimran Singh as Mukh Panch (chief), Gajinder Singh, Satnam Singh, Jaswant Singh and Manmohan Singh. At the same time, the NCK came into being with Jagjit Singh Chauhan, a former Akali Dal office-bearer, as president and Balbir Singh Sandhu as general secretary.

The Dal Khalsa was a compact set-up and had an active roster of just 560 die-hard members at the time of the ban. The NCK was more elitist and was dominated by rich and experienced politicians culled from various parties, and operated with the help of generous funds from abroad. Over 80 per cent of the Dal's members are in the 20–30 age group, mostly from the rural areas. Over 60 per cent are not even graduates, and the majority are unmarried and live in gurudwaras all over the state. Both the Dal and the NCK had branch offices in Mohali and Ferozepur.

The Sikh chauvinists soon went to work to embarrass the Akalis. They put up far-fetched demands: the installation of a radio transmitter in Amritsar, a ban on the sale of tobacco and liquor in Amritsar, a ban on Nirankari Samagams, more autonomy for Punjab. However, the Dal made little headway during the Akali regime and it was only when the Hindu-dominated Congress(I) came to power in the assembly elections in June 1980 that the extremists got a new lease of life.

Crying Havoc: The Dal kicked off in earnest in September 1980 with an agitation for the removal of tobacco shops from Amritsar. The agitation turned violent, and when the Dal realised that its demands were not being met, it cried havoc and unleashed violence in Punjab; one of its victims was Jullundur newspaper proprietor Lala Jagat Narain. The Dal also tried to sabotage the railways and in September 1981 five Dal activists hijacked an Indian Airlines plane to Pakistan. Says Balwant Singh, a former finance minister and Akali Dal leader. "These

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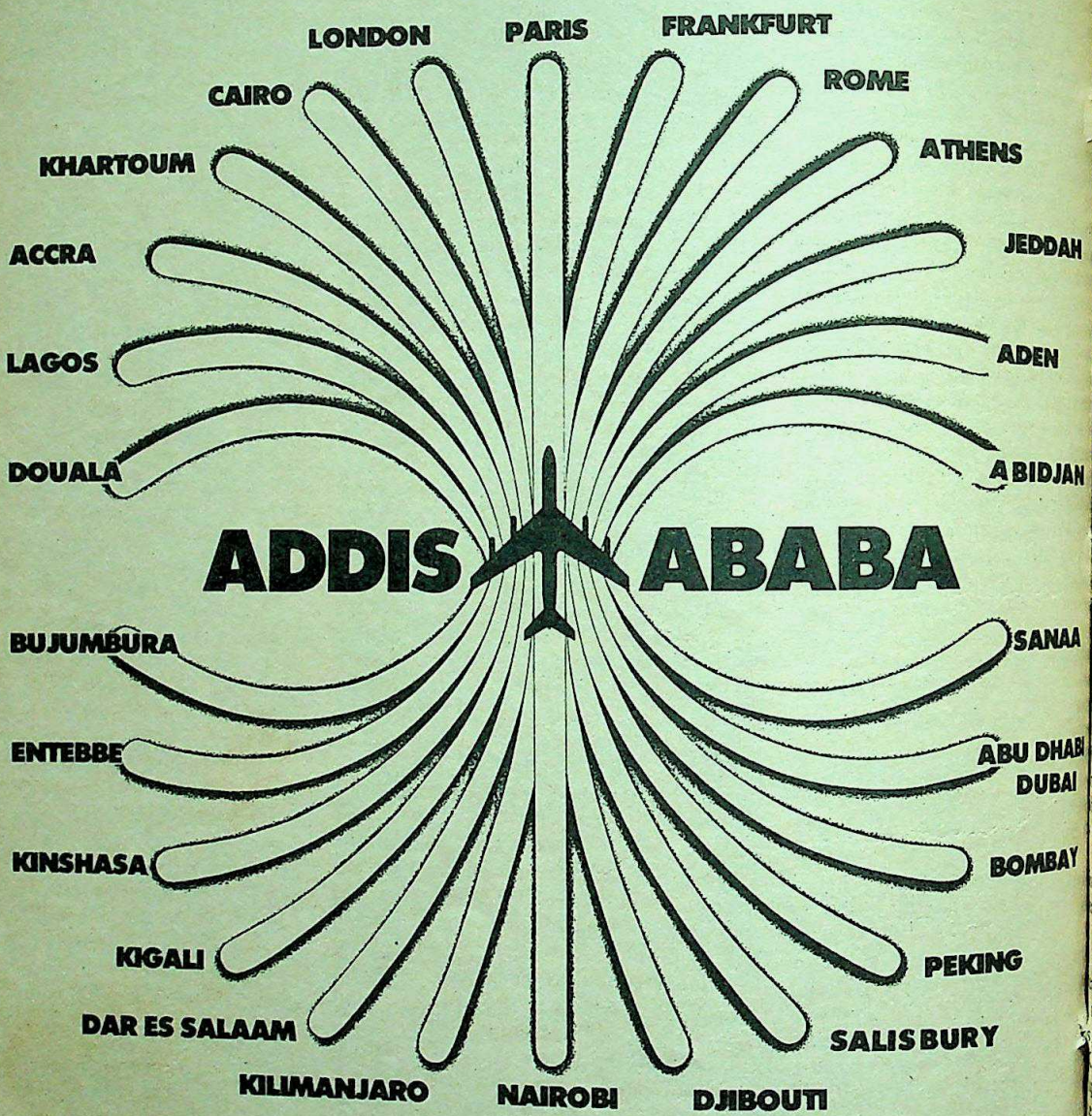
THE AFRICAN CONNECTION



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organisations were allowed by the
(I) to gain popularity because it did
cede reasonable demands put
y us."

ding to Sikh moderates, the state
t's curiously lax attitude toward
ists spurred them on. Until today,
f the 50 people involved in shoot-
murders have been caught. With
chelons of the state police neatly
n communal lines, the Dal had
on to feel secure. In fact, a deputy
general has been accused of
e activists and another Indian
ce officer even touched the feet of
gious leader Sant Bhindranwale
was wanted for his alleged
nt in the Jagat Narain murder.

ing Match: Although both the
d the Congress(I) have probably
ny sighs of relief at the ban, a no-
nd slanging match is in progress.
Singh accused the Akali Dal and
mani Gurudwara Prabandhak
e (SGPC) of shielding the criminals.
Singh elements accused the state
nt of being too lenient with the
n. SGPC chief Gurcharan Singh
ed the chief minister's charge, but
that most extremist leaders had
ter in the Golden Temple. In fact,
ists have used the religious centre
for quite a few decisions and
me of these are:

allation of a radio transmitter by
in the Golden Temple on
12, 1979;

rmation of the NCK, announced in

mran Singh's claiming
sibility for hijacking the Indian
plane to Pakistan in September

ranwale's stay at the temple in
1981, after Jagat Narain's

Khalsa leader Jaswant Singh's
ment on March 16, 1981 of his
to desecrate Hindu shrines with
; and

Khalsa leader Manmohan Singh's
p to the sacrilege in a press
inside the gurudwara.

ED with a particularly vicious
d of extremism, ruling party
bers lost little time in ascribing
es to a "foreign hand", during the
ia debate on the Dal Khalsa. The
istry's suspicions of a foreign link
engthened by reports of the
s of Chauhan, Sandhu and
activist Ganga Singh Dhillon. All
been swinging in and out of the
States and Pakistan, making
inflammatory charges against the Indian Government. In interviews granted to journalists, the leaders explicitly claimed foreign support in their struggle for a Sikh state. Chauhan once said that Henry Kissinger had assured him financial help for a 'Khalistan Airlines'—whose offices, significantly, were located in the building that housed the Pakistan International Airlines office in London.

Chauhan, whose anti-Indian tirades led to his expulsion from the Shiromani Akali Dal at the hands of the then president Sant Fateh Singh, also visited Pakistan a month before the 1971 Indo-Pak war. During the war he appeared on television along with General Yahya Khan, who then handed him the keys of Nankana Saheb, the famous Sikh shrine in Pakistan. The Indian Government impounded his passport in 1972 and ordered him to return home, but Chauhan stayed put abroad until his passport was renewed maintaining contacts with General Daniel Graham, co-chairman of a private organisation known as the American Security Council. He also claims to have met Alexander Haig, US secretary of state, and Charles Percy of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last year." As none of the charges has been repudiated by the US Government, there is reason to believe that Khalistan elements have foreign backing.

Two other leaders—Dhillon and Talwinder Singh, an accused in the Nirankari chief murder case—have not only been allowed entry into the United States, Pakistan, Canada and West Germany, but have also been permitted to use the media there for vitriolic attacks on India. According to Home Ministry sources, Talwinder Singh was instrumental in providing bullet-proof jackets and firearms to the three motorcyclists who killed seven people in Punjab last year.

(From left) Jaswant, Sukhvinder and Manmohan: proclaimed offenders

during the Janata regime.

Provocative Acts: In 1979, Chauhan led a London-based delegation to the then information and broadcasting minister L.K. Advani, to seek permission to install a transmitter in the Golden Temple. His plea was rejected, but an undaunted Chauhan installed his transmitter later in the year, for relaying devotional Sikh songs. He went on to unfurl a Khalistan flag in Anandpur Saheb, and spoke in Khalistan's favour at a Chandigarh meeting called to discuss education. His call evoked little response from the Sikh community, but he persisted and announced the formation of a 'Republic of Khalistan' in June 1980 and issued passports and stamps. When the Central Government launched criminal proceedings against him he fled to Britain.

The Union Government is understandably very annoyed with the US Government for granting Chauhan a visa and had lodged a strong protest. Intelligence agencies have gathered enough evidence from foreign missions about financial and political support for the Sikh extremists. Says one such report: "Dr Chauhan is

Good Finances: Money is no problem for the Khalistan activists. Chauhan, Dhillon and Talwinder Singh alone send over Rs 10 lakh every month to their minions in India. The Dal Khalsa used to collect money from people wishing to settle abroad. Harsimran Singh revealed in a statement that Sandhu was charging every such person Rs 15,000 for a certificate saying that the concerned person was a member of the Dal Khalsa. Using such certificates, over 200 people have been able to secure political asylum in Canada, US and West Germany.

The Khalistan agitation is not likely to die down simply because the authorities have banned the extremists. In fact, the dangerous and provocative antics in Amritsar and Patiala, and later in Delhi, have shown that Sikh extremism has come of age. Zail Singh says that the Khalistan leaders have no following and only "want to serve the interests of their foreign masters by fomenting trouble in India which they don't consider their homeland". That patriotic statement is, however, small consolation for the people who do consider India their homeland.

—PRABHU CHAWLA

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A magnificent indoor stadium—in circumference, the large sp

Report on Asia's greatest spectacle of sport...

Gymnastics. Volleyball. Badminton. These will be the sports on view upon the wooden playing arena of this stadium during the Asian Games.

Here, in November 1982, 25,000 people will gather to view the spectacle of sport.

The fourth largest in the world.

This covered stadium, the fourth largest in the world and the largest in Asia, is a feat of technological brilliance—and the first of its kind the world over to be completed in less than 2 years.

Breathtaking design.

Inside, the effect is breathtaking. From the circular central arena the stands sweep upwards to the height of a 6-storey building. Above, resting solidly on 8 pylons spread over the periphery, the 2000-tonne space-frame structural dome soars to a height of 44 metres.

This steel and aluminium roofing dome spans 150 metres—yet not a single pillar disturbs the sightlines.

Prof. Z.S. Makowsky, the world-renowned structural expert who was present during the crucial decentering operation involving the removal of all temporary supports and the gentle lowering of the dome upon the pylons, stated afterwards that "this day should go into the annals of the history of engineering achievement."

Unique lighting and sound.

The light and sound systems, specially designed, are scientific marvels. The brillant illumination, enough for colour tv coverage without colour distortion, will come from 216 metal-halide lamps mounted on circular catwalks 21 metres above the floor.

The integrated audio-communication system, designed by Philips and being used for the first time in India, incorporates a high quality public address system, micro-processor based intercoms and digital wireless paging equipment. Using an automatic noise dependent audio-processor (ANDAPP), the public address system ensures high intelligibility of transmitted speech, even during the noisiest ambient conditions. An electronic equalisation circuit ensures a uniform frequency response at all points in this stadium.

2-in-1 stadium.

Another unique feature of this fully airconditioned stadium is a 22-metre foldable PVC partition which can be raised in 12 minutes. This partition effectively makes the stadium a 2-in-1, with the provision for holding two sports events simultaneously, cutting out the sight and to a large extent the sound of one from the other.

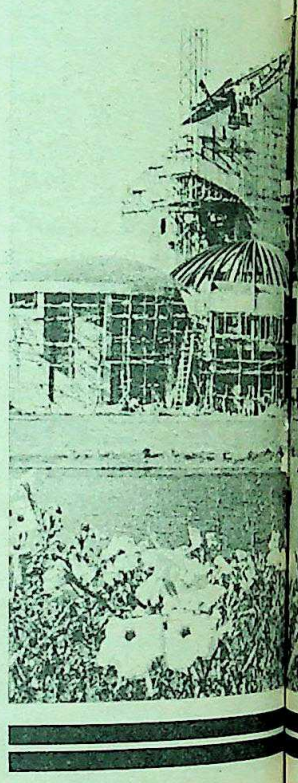
All-round excellence.

In this stadium complex not only the indoors but also the outdoors is well planned. The comprehensive outdoor lighting system by Philips uses sodium vapour lamps to give a high level of illumination—which ensures proper security, free movement and quick entrance or exit.

In its conception, this stadium is remarkable—immensely complex in its engineering design yet simple in its functional purpose: to give sportsmen the best in playing facilities and spectators the finest of viewing.

A remarkable facility for Delhi.

The construction of this stadium complex is part of a meticulously coordinated activity involving hundreds of specialist agencies. An effort which will help make Delhi one of the finest sports centres in the world. An effort which is a tribute to youth of India, because it gives them wonderful sports facilities.



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tadius—half a kilometre large span stadium in Asia.

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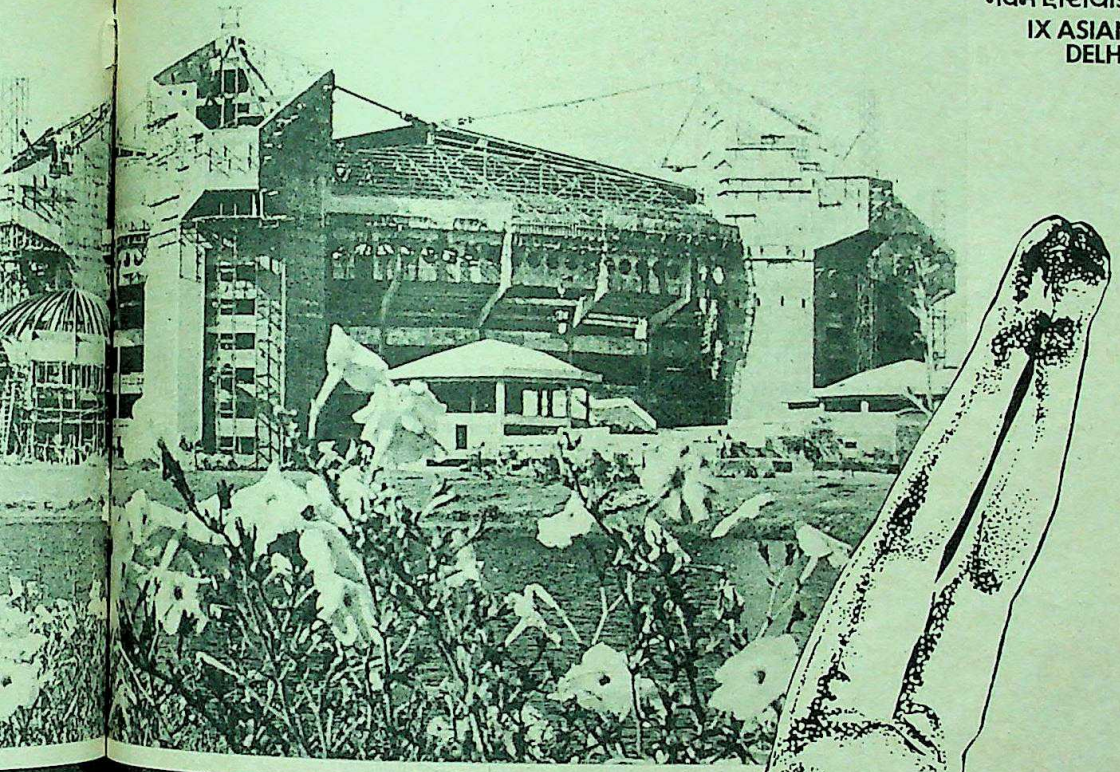
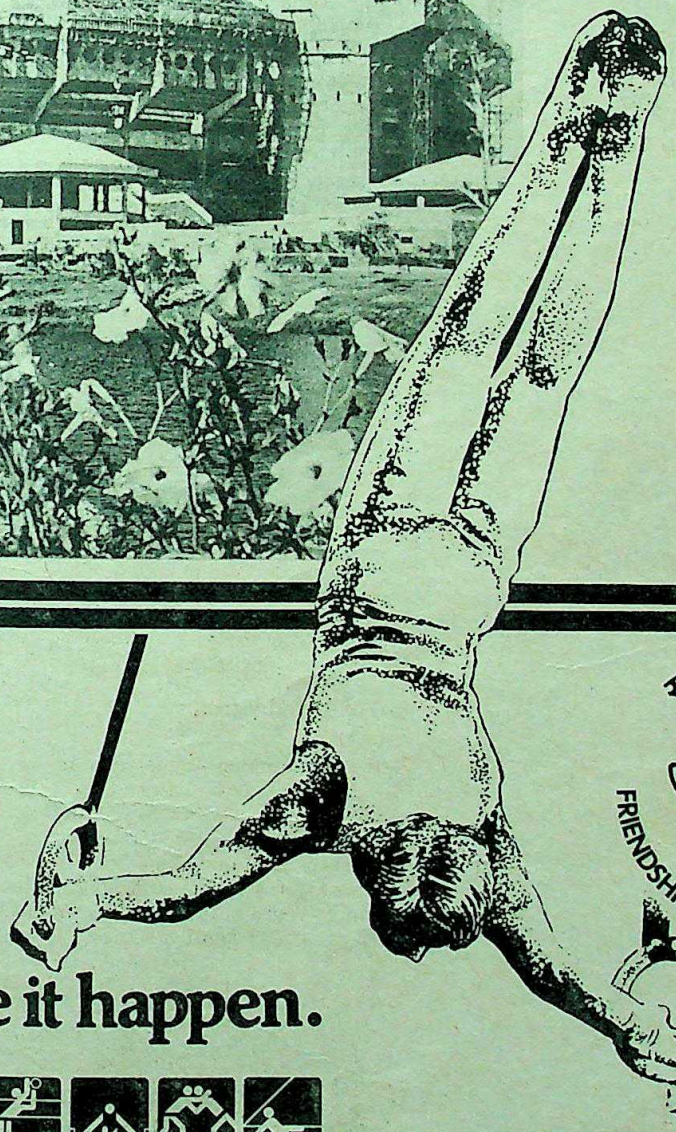
IX ASIAN GAMES
DELHI 1982





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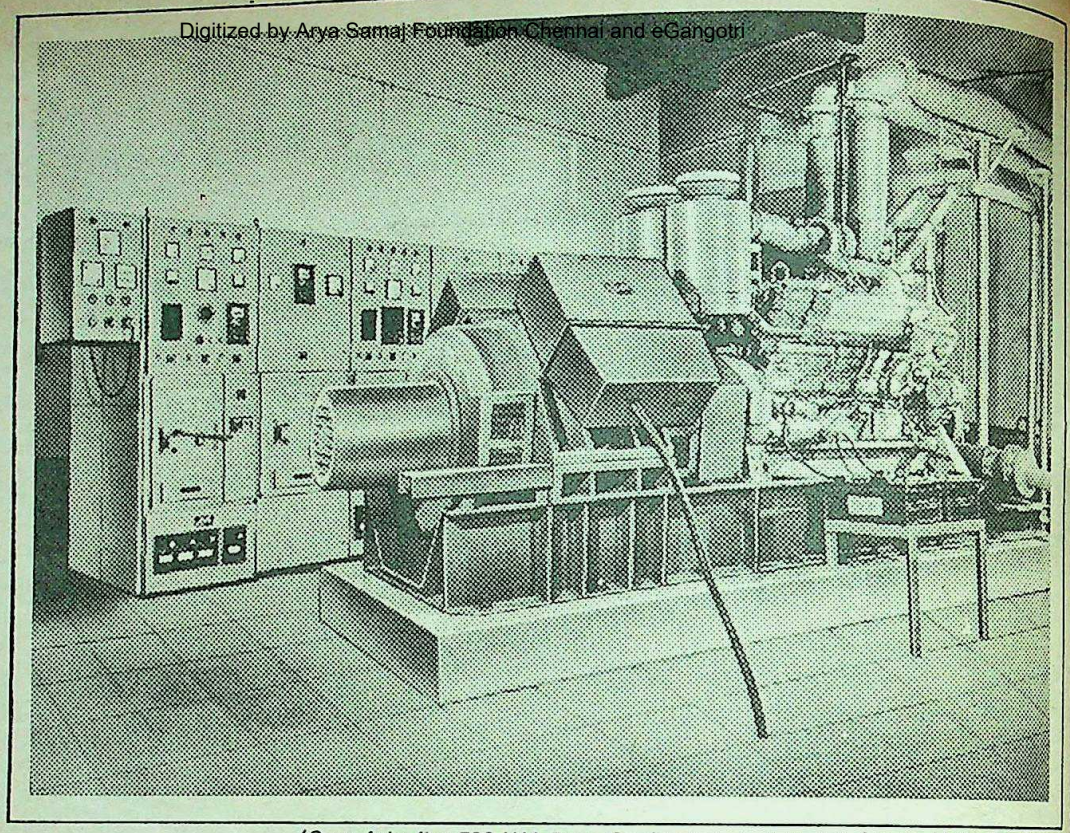

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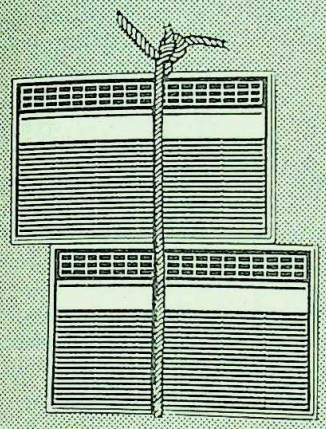

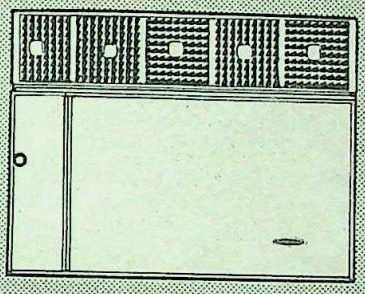

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DOORDARSHAN

The Tedium Is The Messag

1984. It is a television boom the like of which India has never seen. From the slopes of the Malabar Hills in Bombay, to lush green pastures of Partapur near Meerut and the sprouting urban jungle of New Delhi's Defence Colony, the fashionable New Alipore area of Calcutta and the trusty old Anna Salai Road of Madras, it is the same spectacle of thousands of TV aerials sticking up in haughty silhouette.

The Indian channels are humming with cascading electromagnetic waves—some skimming along the earth, others ricocheting back from the two truly Bharatiya pies-in-the-sky hovering 26,000 km above the ground. Giant microwave towers have been set round the nation like stiff giants.

The TV commercial section never had it so good. The three daily Chitrahaars, with three 10 minute slots on sale, are each fetching Rs 2,000 per second. All film-based programmes command 95 per cent viewing. But, since no non-film programme is viewed by more than 5 per cent, the prime minister's daily appearance on screen has to be timed between the Chitrahaars.

THE SCENARIO is comic, conjectural, satirical, emphasising the dark side to the millennium; but it is not one bit improbable. Rolling itself out of a Rip Van Winkle slumber, the Government is suddenly rushing to make up for lost time in expanding the tentacles of Doordarshan. The sizeable swelling of Doordarshan's budget in 1980-81 to 1982-83 (Rs 5 crore to Rs 14 crore) reflects the will, the determination and the tenacious effort of the Information and Broadcasting (I & B) Ministry to find resources for the state-monopoly television network's mushroom growth.

The list of projects on hand, which have been recently completed or are nearing completion, makes impressive reading. Most of them are in the form of long-term investments in electronic hardware, and Doordarshan engineers are working overtime along with their counterparts in the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) as well as the Posts & Telegraphs (P & T) Department, to realise a grand vision of the Indian global village.

Vasant Sathe, 57, the ebullient I & B minister, is currently calling the shots in nearly all matters of hardware expansion. If the plans go according to schedule, by the end of the year microwave circuits capable of two-way picture transmission will skirt the country linking Madras, Bangalore, Bombay, Jaipur, Kota, Delhi, Lucknow, Kanpur, Patna and Calcutta. Later, the microwave circuit will meander right back to Madras, taking in its stride Bhubaneswar and Hyderabad.

Quantum Leap: The microwave will firstly eliminate the physical diff sending and receiving pictures betw stations simultaneously. So, tech there will be fewer difficulties in sho coverage of events at all centres con the linkage at the same time. This the germinal point of a national Simultaneously, INSAT-1B, the earth which will go up on the heels of will have, like its predecesso transponders beaming to every squ of Indian territory every picture tra These beams can then be strengthe string of low power—and low cos transmitters for channeling throug TV sets. "The pictures will be e good and can be picked up throug country," says U.R. Rao, director o satellite centre at Bangalore.

On the threshold of the colour end 1983, 120,000 homes will brig with colour TV and makers of colour are cheerfully predicting sales of 10 every year. Said Sunder Vachani of Electroniks: "India is a large, u market for colour TV. It is a pity Government did not wake up to it recently." There is a large rainbow bubble looming in front of the TV today. Will the bubble burst?

It has to. By a quirky political the bumbledom of Doordarshan sudden saddled with the onerous having to generate software thre times more than at present. In pla the Government's Leviathan which country's television network wi gear itself to finding eight

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...s a day instead of the average ...—and keeping its audiences ...here will be hook-up programmes ...ire country, two-way microwave ...between stations and on-going ...errestrial (local) stations as well. ...ts and purposes, it is a quantum ...gest ever in Indian broadcasting. ...ikely to be a leap in the dark.

...aphazard rise of Indian tele- ...come to symbolise one aspect ... others: that the "idiot box" ...of the idiocy of its viewers but its ...; that Doordarshan's sole ...t in its two decades of existence ...rely standardised mediocrity but ...lised it; And that today, on the ...Great Leap Forward, it is as far ...om its charter of providing edu- ...rmation and entertainment—in ...as it can reasonably expected to ...ear 1985. For as the humblest, ...eless avid, viewer of Door- ...decasts will confess: the nightly ...neither particularly edifying, nor ...e. and the only entertainment ...hing is when the Bombay movies ...s one cynical observer points out: ...evision's only noticeable achieve- ...been that it has emerged as the ...r relation of Bombay's commer- ...." For education, Indians conti- ...end on their sages, for authentic ...nformation on newspapers and ...e BBC overseas service, and for ...ent on Hindi films or excerpts ...

...Facts: Shailendra Shankar, ...an's balding and none-too- ...director-general, is therefore ...reticent about how exactly he is ...ll the air hours as the network ...begins to send its after-shocks ...production line. And at a ...of Doordarshan station directors ...w Delhi last fortnight, it was ...clear that the authorities, from ...wards, had little idea of how to ...eased programme timings. The ...that, however belatedly, dawned ...bosses was that:

...ingle non-film based and non- ...amme compels more than half ...try's 1.3 million TV set owners to ...on;

...is no way of increasing ...time or improving the quality ...ion without earning more;

...y to higher revenue is to have ...eased programmes;

...total duration of film-based ...s put out by Doordarshan now, ...a half hours a week, of which the ...m industry alone accounts for ...e hours 45 minutes. There are plans for increasing transmission time to nearly eight hours a day, including the second commercial channel to be introduced in Bombay. The other plan is to begin a second Chitrahaar/Chhayageet (a string of song and dance sequences from Hindi films), consisting of chunks from current billings in movie theatres and charging producers Rs 5,000 per song for the extra mileage such a broadcast offers in terms of box-office sales. The present practice is to pay producers Rs 250 for each song presented in Chitrahaar.

Doordarshan has every reason to hobble along on the crutches of the film industry. Its own TV Audience Survey, published in December last year, brings out the programme "rating" (the percentage of TV sets actually switched on) of each programme put out by each station It shows the pathetic tilt towards films and the abysmally low ratings of Doordarshan's own general programmes. In Delhi, for instance, as few as three sets are turned on per 100 sets when the weekly 30-minute programme for industrial workers, Hamare Kamgaar Hamare Udyog is on the air.

The rating for Krishi Darshan, the rural programme put out five times a week, wavers between just four and just two per cent. The 13 to 15-minute documentary made on developmental themes, is watched by only 10 per cent of viewers; the news in English by 13 to 15 per cent on a week-day; the magazine programme on science by a modest 29 per cent and the Saturday children's programme by a rock-bottom 2 per cent.

Popular Programmes: On the other hand, Phool Khilen Hain Gulshan Gulshan, the interview of Bombay film personalities —an unabashed plug for them—laced with syrupy smiles from its popular hostess Tabassum, had a cheerful rating of 68 per cent in Delhi and a dizzy 83 per cent in Bombay. The weekly Hindi film drew 84 per cent in Delhi, 81 per cent in Bombay and 73 per cent in Calcutta. Chitrahaar was rated 84 per cent in Delhi, 86 per cent in Bombay, and 81 per cent in Calcutta. It was indeed the tail that wagged the dog. Said J.M. Singh, controller of commercials, Doordarshan: "We do have difficulties in selling slots other than film slots. It's tragic, but that is the reality of Doordarshan."

The whole point of stretching out on the film-based programmes now is to carve out more and more of such highly profitable (super A) prime time slots as the 10 minutes preceding Chitrahaar fetch a cool Rs 400 per second and is likely to go up soon. Recently, there were rumblings at Doordarshan that some smart executives had really been arranging advertisements within the slot so that they had a still higher "recall value", thus carving out an unofficial super A1 slot. In Delhi there is a scramble to buy blocks of super A prime time and then sell them, often at a 100 per cent premium.

Thanks entirely to the popularity of film-based programmes, Doordarshan's advertisement revenue, which was Rs 4 crore a year ago, is likely to touch Rs 16 crore at the end of this year. All of a sudden Doordarshan's cash register had started ringing and the advertising agencies have woken up to this new and untapped medium. Muses Sathe: "Let us earn more from TV so that we can spend more on development." Echoing Sathe's view, Suren Chawla, media controller of the country's top billing (Rs 80 crore) advertising agency, Hindustan Thomson Associates, says: "Film and film-based programmes have to be on top in TV. As a media man the importance of films sometimes frightens me. Films sustain television and radio. Take films away and both will collapse."

The strategy may be workable, but not all media pundits support Sathe and Chawla. Says Iqbal Malik, a former deputy director-general of Doordarshan, whose scathing newspaper columns on Doordarshan are one of the I & B Ministry's major sources of insomnia: "It is ridiculous that Indian broadcasting, after 55 years, is as subservient to the film producers as those film extras are. Doordarshan is mortgaged to the Bombay film industry and the bureaucracy of Shastri Bhavan (which houses the I & B Ministry) in that order." Ridiculous but inevitable for an outfit which in ostrich-like fashion shunned commercialism till six years ago and is now belatedly trying shortcuts. And the appalling boredom induced by most Doordarshan programmes is indicative of the long distance that must be travelled.

WHY DO Doordarshan's non-film programmes put people off? Elucidates Amita Malik, Iqbal's wife and a veteran film and TV critic: "The Doordarshan shows are poor not because the subjects are always poorly chosen, but because nobody makes any effort to present them with imagination." Her weekly columns in *The Times Of India* which now appear in the *Indian Express* called Sight and Sound chronicle the ham-handedness of the men and women who put out programmes on the box. The prickly column recalls a continual string of goofs; the newscaster girl who spoke Hindi till the other day, pronouncing mausoleum as ma-say-os-leem-um; Sathe hogging TV time himself on the pretext of holding some sort of a Diwan-e-am with teleclub members; viewers' letters being sifted to keep the unflattering ones out; Sunday films being chosen to favour the current billing of a *sarkari* film maker who is on the board of the National Film

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VASANT SATHE

"Our Ethics Are Different"

VASANT Sathe, the Union Information & Broadcasting minister, is a man of impeccable etiquette. He is also a modern man who loves all sorts of gadgets, including colour TV and video recording instruments. He is ready to go along with even his critics, but is tough and unyielding when it touches his basic belief that the broadcasting media should remain a part of the Government. Sitting in his New Delhi bungalow, INDIA TODAY *Correspondent* SUMIT MITRA *spent three hours chatting with him on wide-ranging issues. Excerpts:*

Q. ***A lot of people, both within and outside the Government, say that you are pursuing questionable objectives, such as colour TV. Any comment?***

A. Yes. I am aware of the criticism though I don't know how much of it is informed or unmotivated. Before racking our brains over whether we should have colour TV, we must ask ourselves whether it was justified to have TV in the first place. My mind is absolutely clear on this. Our culture is an audio-visual culture; our traditions and rituals are all based on sights and sounds. In the past, communication took place through roving minstrels, through folk dance and music that demanded body action. Now, it is TV which has to be the main communicating medium. And, our critics should make a note here, TV all over the world today is synonymous with colour TV, just as airplanes are synonymous with jet planes.

Q. ***But jet propulsion by itself did not increase the cost of flying whereas colour TV is a costly proposition and you are taking a quantum jump.***

A. Not at all. Just look at the cost. In foreign countries, you can buy a colour TV set with 20-inch screen off the shelf for as little as US $300 (Rs 2,700). Now, our manufacturers are capable of making TV sets here for only Rs 2,600, provided you remove taxes and other levies and let them import a tool kit of US $80 (Rs 720) for every set. But the Government somehow wants to earn at least Rs 5,000 for each set by way of taxes, and that escalates cost and restricts sale. I think our basic attitudes with regard to consumer electronics suffers from certain mental inhibitions.

Q. ***Can you please explain that?***

A. You see, the four tiny island states of Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore now export Rs 1,200 crore of consumer electronics whereas this land of 685 million people, having the world's third-largest concentration of technical personnel, does not export even 12 cr worth of consumer electronics. I hav feeling that the growth of consumer e tronics in India has been systematic crippled by somebody somewhere.

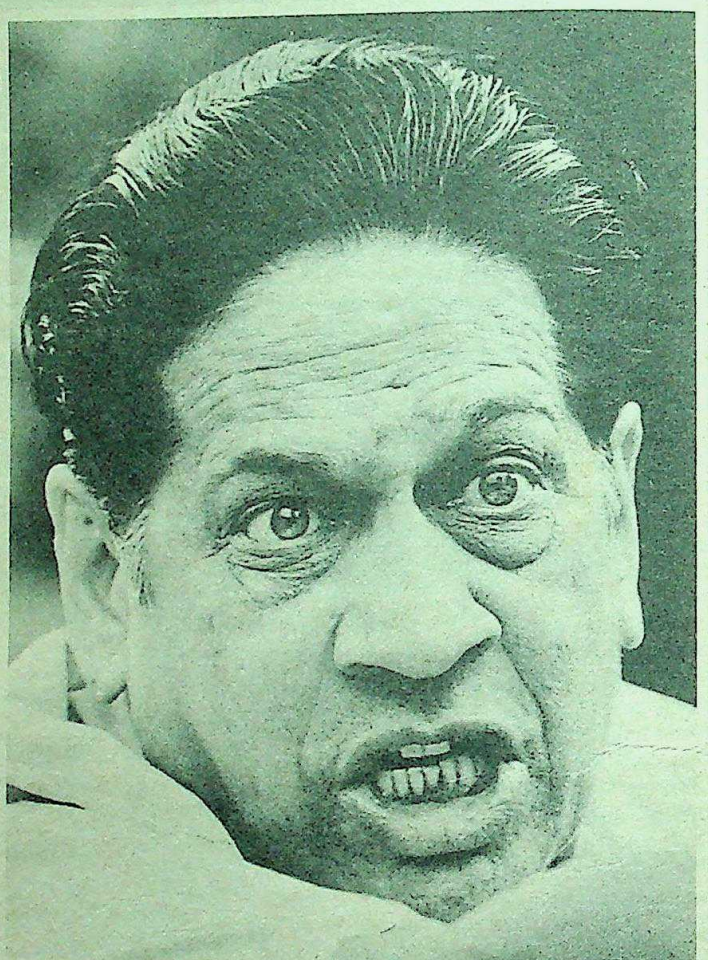
Q. ***Well, the prime minister is her in charge of electronics.***

A. I am sorry to say that the pr minister has not always been corre advised in this regard. But I don't w to restrict myself to electronics alo What I mean to say is that comm cation has not received the requ priority in this cou Be it colour TV, high-power transmit for radio— the stock ply that I hear is: " Sathe Saab, what yo saying is fine. But w is the money?" I shameful that you c hear the Bombay sta from Calcutta, the cutta station from M ras, or the Delhi sta from anywhere. If I d have 1000 kilowatt tr mitters how do I s... our people from listen to powerful broadc from neighbouring co tries? Am I expecte stand on top of Mt E est and blare out message of Akash through a speci horn?

Q. ***With regar television, what ex are your plans?***

A. My plan make a VCR (video sette recorder) with foot projection fa available to each ele fied village of the co by 1985. The colou is really the VCR e tor. Programmes ca canned and run th it, and, when proj on a 10 feet scree least 5,000 people watch it. It will replace the cinema, w has just about 10,000 outlets. Once have it you can literally bombard mind of the public However, to start w we are going to have colour transmis as well as extension of programme up to eight hours a day. There will be a second commercial channel, in B bay, to start with.

Q. ***Very spectacular plans indeed what is the software with which you*** ...



BHAWAN SINGH

Sathe: "TV needs Mrs Gandhi more than she needs TV"

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the masses?

Mostly our own programmes. programmes during the day, rural oon programmes during the early and entertainment-oriented mmes in the late evening. Even at ment, Doordarshan has about 500 of software in cans.

Pardon me for saying so. But don't that the 500 hours of software you tioning here may not conform to of entertainment or instruction?

(With a smile) Yes, you're quite Some of our programmes really dull format.

So you'll have a yawning gap hardware and software.

That may not be entirely true. ing I did at the behest of Shrimati was to go in for improvement of e. She gave me the most impor- gestion that TV should go to the Then the tele-clubs began, made lar TV watchers. We began a of evaluating their suggestions, orporating these in programmes.

Yet the programmes are dull and s. The newscasting is ama-

Oh, these are technical defi- There are very few visuals to go ws because we don't yet have ENG onic News Gathering) cameras. e microwave links and the satel- -ups are complete, we shall have culty getting visuals.

But I'm not talking about technical ce. I'm talking about the Door- 's concept of news.

What is wrong with that?

It projects only Mrs Gandhi and ry.

That's not true. You are not the son to say that either. I've worked t. On an average Shrimati Gandhi 5th of newstime on TV. But show tional newspaper which does not e that much of front-page space to ry day.

Frankly I think she gets much me on TV. Whenever she cuts a flies in or out, meets visiting ies, lays foundation-stones—the ows her.

Because she is news. Because her ribbons has an intrinsic news Because she makes policy nts very often. Because she draws And because the TV needs her han she needs the TV.

OK, she is news. But what about ily members? Are they news too?

Not as family members. On al merit—yes. You must know did not cover the news of Maneka Gandhi's leaving her mother-in-law's house: because it was a strictly personal matter.

Q. ***Do you think that broadcasting should enjoy autonomy in India?***

A. We want autonomy—functional autonomy. And the Doordarshan is already enjoying it. In day-to-day matters they have full discretion and absolutely no interference from the top.

Q. ***Why does the Doordarshan avoid controversies?***

A. Well, just look at what the press is doing. Going by the press, the general impression one gets is that there is a total break-down in law and order in the country, that civilians are totally corrupt, that politicians are totally corrupt. This has a fragmenting effect on the country. There are forces of parochialism everywhere. If they have failed to break up this country, it is only because we have a charismatic leader like Shrimati Gandhi.

Q. ***. . . and also because of the government-owned media's firm resolve not to report these things?***

A. You see, the newspaper-wallas report what sells. We don't want our media to be parts of a consumerist society. Your ethics and our ethics are entirely different. There are certain things we can never allow. We cannot allow programmes that incite violence and racial hatred just as much as we cannot allow liquor and cigarette ads.

Q. ***But putting out scanty information about communal unrest often encourages rumours, which are worse.***

A. We really do not avoid controversies. We merely do not overplay them.

Q. ***In 23 years of television broadcasting, we haven't had a single TV talent.***

A. Why, there are a lot of talents. That brilliant actress, Smita Patil . . . She was with TV.

Q. ***She was and that's the whole point. She made her mark elsewhere, in the film industry. Why can't TV retain talents?***

A. Because we can't pay the kind of money the film industry can pay. But things are changing now. As you know, Satyajit Ray has made a film for TV. A lot of people objected to the film, but I've told everyone that Doordarshan must keep its gates open to talent from outside, I really want it to be the meeting point of all disciplines—art, sculpture, film, music, literature—all. And colour will really make all the difference. You see, the Nature is in colour, not in black-and-white. *Yeh bat in kambakhton ko kaise samjhaen?* (How can one explain this to idiots?)

Development Corporation (NFDC).

The list goes on and so do the excuses by Doordarshan and the ministry. Sathe in his characteristic cocksure manner reels out the reasons which are, according to him, dearth of proper equipment. He has a point there. The hardware problem is all-embracing in Doordarshan. Says news producer Harsaran Bir Kaur: "Working here is almost a miracle. It's like shooting *Star Wars* in Edison's studio." Kaur is hardly exaggerating. Doordarshan studios all over the country are dungeons which look more like junkyards than cradles of creativity.

At the Bombay Doordarshan Kendra there is just no fixed place for rehearsals, despite the stream of entertainment programmes churned out by the centre, and which need to be painfully rehearsed. Senior Producer B.K. Giri sits in a 4 ft by 5 ft cubby-hole, Assistant Director Yakub Syed sits in a converted passage boarded up with plywood. There are no sound recording facilities and artistes record sound one day and then when a studio is available are taken to the Kendra, where they mouth the songs so that the sound-track can be grafted on to the film later.

In Calcutta the Doordarshan Kendra is located, since its inception seven years ago, in a condemned studio which used to roll out technically inferior films. It is a minor miracle of broadcasting that the whole station has been operating all these years from an outstation broadcasting (OB) van. The transmitter tower is yet to be rigged up.

Bureaucratic Sway: Everywhere in Doordarshan the babus hold sway. By a bureaucratic fiat, the use of portable lights (sun guns) has been banned on outdoor day assignments. What does a producer do when the aesthetics of his art require a subject to be back-lit? "Wait till the sun actually dips, or rises the next day, depending on where the subject is," says Kamaleshwar, former additional director-general of Doordarshan whose services were recently terminated. Newscasting at Doordarshan is oddly studio-bound, and a big yawn generally because its 103 news stringers do not turn in adequate footage. They take it easy because Doordarshan pays the abysmally low rate of Rs 8 per foot of non-synchronised film.

Foreign visuals are almost non-existent, because Visnews, the London-based TV syndicate to which Doordarshan subscribes, has switched entirely to three-quarter inch video transmission of pictures as against its earlier practice of hooking across film pictures to India. But since Doordarshan did not acquire the receivers, despite being forewarned about it as far back as 1980, transmission of foreign pictures has totally stopped since April 1, this year. The 30 minutes of newscasting are static, non-

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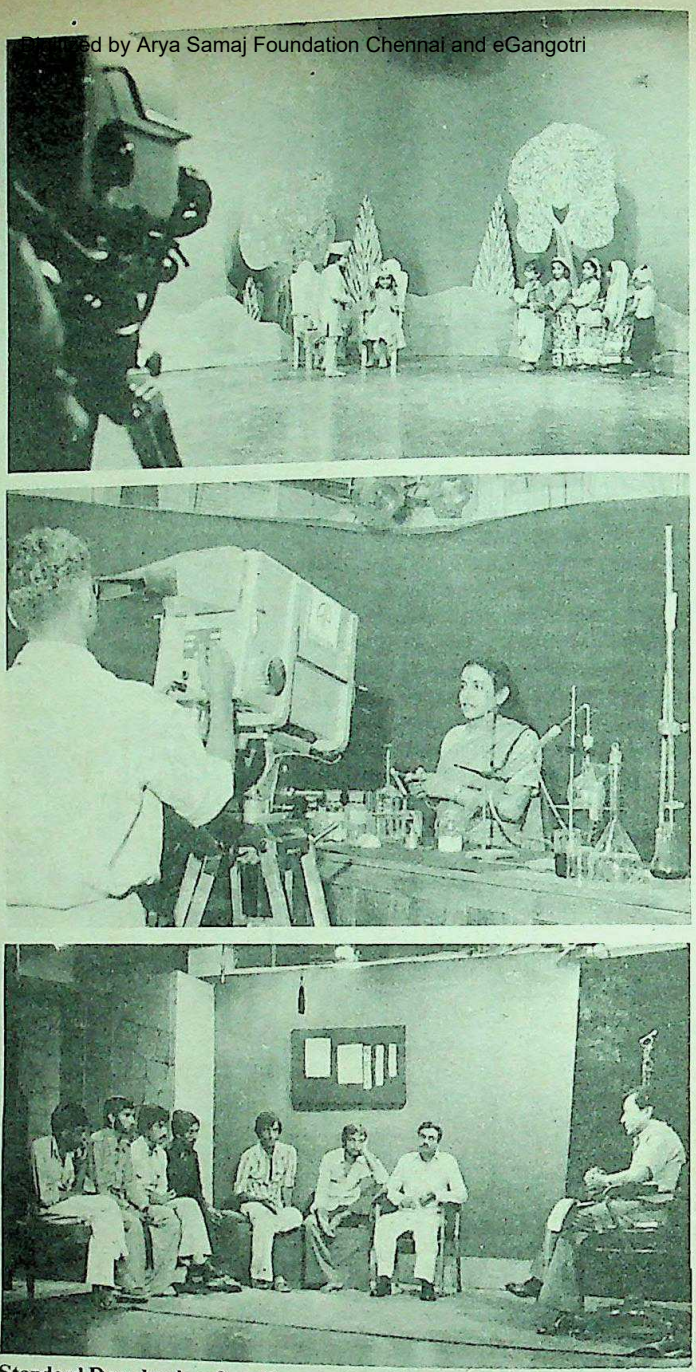
visual, and almost an extension of the All India Radio (AIR) news. It is really so because Doordarshan news, by a strange convention, is written in AIR's newsroom, with no feel for the visible twitch of the facial muscles, the smile, the dramatic movement of the eyes and heads—in short, the video perception.

Doordarshan isn't much more imaginative in dealing with independent documentary and programme makers who, in a country abounding in celluloid talent, could enrich its programmes no end. Yet, there is a criminal neglect of individual, non-staff talent. "The Doordarshan people cannot hope to improve the quality of their programmes as long as they stick to their present style of functioning," says S.S. Oberoi, managing director of the Bombay-based Art Commercial which specialises in making ad films and TV commercials. What Oberoi has in mind is Doordarshan's going rate for commercials, which can be as high as Rs 24,000 a minute, compared with the miserly Rs 60,000 to Rs 70,000 they pay for a 10 to 15-minute feature programme. If a one-minute commercial can cost several lakhs to produce, "How can they expect good quality programmes at that price? You can't be rigid in a field like showbiz. One documentary may take one day, another may take six months. They have to be practical if they want to get better people, better programmes and better facilities."

Doordarshan's bureaucracy allows little talent or creative instincts to survive. There are few chances for people who are chosen for posts at the production or the organisational level to create, or for that matter, organise anything even remotely presentable. The salary scales for "staff artistes" are abysmally low, consequently inviting little talent or creative faculty. Their basic requirement for artistes is an arts degree with an "artistic background".

The hierarchical structure in Doordarshan, with its corresponding salary scales, itself provides an insight into the material at hand for producing presentable software. Starting off with the director and the assistant station director, who are selected through the UPSC examinations and receive a salary of Rs 2,200 and Rs 1,600 respectively, pay scales dip dramatically at the actual creative level, which is several rungs below. Producers of programmes earn Rs 900 with production assistants getting a meagre Rs 600 per month. A cameraman draws Rs 800 and so does a technical man like the film editor or sound recordist. A glamorous post like that of a casual newscaster would fetch an embarrassing Rs 75 per reading. Television in India is not exactly a haven of high incomes.



Standard Doordarshan fare (from top) a children's programme, a science feature and a folk show: bombarded with boredom

The crux of the m
that Doordarshan, whic
easily become the most c
influential and exciting
tutions, continues to ru
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Its bureaucratic,
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Divided Staff:
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duction staff, the tw
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the man who operates
(the rail on which the
moves) is engineer
while the cameraman
production. What
when the producer asks
camera to dolly for
backward? The ca
stays a good two ya
from the camera be
dollyman won't let him touch it
placed on the dolly.

The sound recordist is produc
but the mixer is not, so the record
ends after shooting because the e
staff won't let him come near the
when mixing of sound tracks is bei
various levels. Doordarshan
amorphous as a caste-ridden India

It is best evidenced in the
officials in Doordarshan. In the
now-on appearance of an ov
additional director-general, in sta
middle levels and the spectacular

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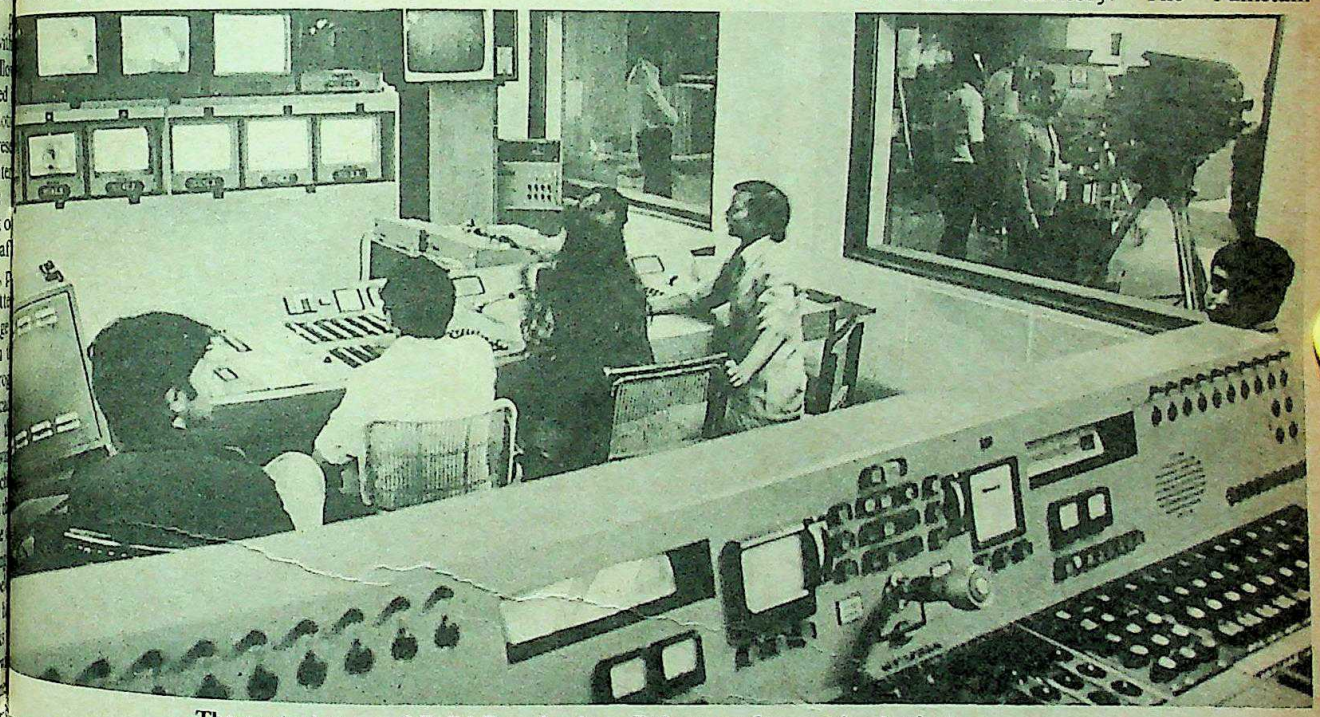
connected officials. There is no for an additional director-general rshan; nevertheless Kamaleshwar ght along and in course of time he weightiest of mandarins in use, the unimpressive New Delhi han headquarters. The official r the non-renewal of tenure is as a bureaucratic mind can think up: . Kamaleshwar's papers had not p before the Union Public Service on (UPSC) in time. But Sathe, while INDIA TODAY, coughed up the true aid he: "Doordarshan treats a like a human body treats an germ. The body either throttles the gets infected by it. In war's case the germ was killed." back as 1970, Doordarshan was from AIR and its director-general tatus of an additional secretary in Ministry. But, as an old

They somehow manage to put the Government's seal on everything they produce. A lot of freshers join Doordarshan bubbling with enthusiasm, but end up in the twisted corridors of the Government as lifeless puppets. A retired station director told the working group on the autonomy of broadcasting, headed by journalist B.G. Verghese, that he "joined Akashvani a fearless man, but retired a timid person". This is equally true of Doordarshan.

Their programmes are naturally of two kinds: downright banal or prostrating to the Government of the day. Just how banal a Doordarshan programme can get was evident from a documentary shown on the summer exodus and the railways put out by the Delhi station on May 10. Two tense-faced railway bureaucrats with double chins did all the talking at the speed of express trains. Within 10 yards of the office there must have been a thriving black market in

filtering in from neighbouring countries. The three neighbours with strong station signals—Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh—have all evolved a system of lively, visually-oriented, dynamic broadcasts. Even a small network like Bangladesh subscribes to two international TV syndicates—Visnews and Columbia Broadcasting Service (CBS)—while India takes just one, Visnews. Transmissions from Dacca are extremely popular in Calcutta, where many TV owners have fitted their sets with booster antennae (price: Rs 1,500). News from Dacca is accompanied by satellite-transmitted films, say, of Sadat's assassination, obtained through CBS link-up.

Pakistan TV broadcasts are watched in border districts of Amritsar, Ferozepur and Jammu, as well as Jullundur, Kapurthala and Simla. The signals are visible, with the help of booster antennae, as far as 150 km into Indian territory. The Pakistani



The control room of Delhi Doordarshan: little space for creative instincts

han hand said: "Their divorce e still on probation." The entire of Doordarshan, barring only two rants from the Indian Adminis-rvice (IAS), is drawn from AIR. s a living relic from the audio era Chief Engineer R.B.L. Srivastava.

FAILURE of equipment and the of bumbledom is still a part, and y a part of the story. The more real rit large on the human aspect of ganisation, whose 5,000-odd s look upon themselves—and are pon—as just government servants.

seat reservations. But that is controversial and Doordarshan wouldn't touch it with a barge pole.

Indian TV avoids controversies because, as Verghese said, "It's afraid of the real issues. It broadcasts only such news which is safe for the Government of the day." Thus the news of Maneka Gandhi's expulsion from the prime minister's house was ignored (*see interview*). Thus the Antulay *faux pas* went unreported until its waves lapped the walls of Parliament.

Dynamic Broadcasts: It's hardly surprising then to find a steadily rising popularity in India of TV broadcasts

programmes rich in Urdu humour, such as *Fifty Fifty* and *Bade Mian,* are extremely popular in India. The only reverse traffic is Indian films and film-based programmes.

In Madras, Doordarshan officials may soon be the only ones watching the TV programmes, as a wag quips. Sri Lanka TV, with its special broadcasts in Tamil, English and Hindi, called *Rupavahini*, has dominated the TV scene. As distinct from Doordarshan's hash of programmes, Sri Lanka broadcasts Tamil plays, classical music, old Tamil films and the latest films in English, Hindi and Tamil—all in colour.

Madras film producers are perturbed by

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the popularity of *Rupavahini*. Said one: "It is the biggest threat to the Tamil film industry because it beams the latest Tamil films." Last month the NFDC Madras branch, protested to Sri Lanka TV and there has been a suspension of Tamil films.

Interference: Yet, the whole machinery of Doordarshan, under its veneer of neutrality, often serves as a crude propaganda tool of the party in power. On February 16 this year, Mrs Gandhi addressed a rally at Brigade Parade Ground in Calcutta. Union Energy Minister A.B.A. Ghani Khan Chaudhury, a worthy from West Bengal, who had been present at the rally and later saw a 30-minute show of it on Calcutta TV, burst out in anger to find that the crowd scenes had not been adequately shot. He got in touch with Sathe and hey presto, the producer was shifted to a non-news department.

Later on, the Calcutta TV Station Director, Shiv Kumar Sharma, decided to blacklist its stringer Durgadas Chatterjee, who had covered the occasion. His letter to Chatterjee, dated March 1, 1982, and marked "confidential" D.O. No. Cal-TV 2 (N)/82-PM, knocks the bottom out of Sathe's specious argument that Doordarshan is free from political interference. Sharma showed the way: "You had been specifically briefed by our producer to provide sufficient footage of shots of the big crowds assembled for the meeting. Except for one shot, that too of a small section of a crowd, the roll exposed by you contains only the arrival and dance reception given to the prime minister." A significant charge!

Yet more appalling instances, albeit recent ones, of Doordarshan's slavish eagerness to please the powers that be or play it safe include a total black-out of the Maneka-Mrs Gandhi episode, a peremptory dismissal of one of its popular, freelance English newscasters, Komal G.B. Singh when she became involved in a totally unrelated dispute with Delhi Police (her services had to be restored at the behest of Sathe himself), and once again a noticeable lack of the Opposition's campaign in the forthcoming Assembly elections.

So supine is Doordarshan, so complete and octopus-like is the stranglehold of the Government on it, that it readily surrenders its role as an information medium. Last March, it sent its most senior newsman with Mrs Gandhi on the trip to London. At her press conference, the correspondent was conspicuous for not asking a single question. Reason: radio and TV correspondents are government officers first, and cannot ask questions to the head of the Government.

Vexing Problem: All this, of course, leads to the vexed question of the autonomy of Doordarshan and AIR. Mrs Gandhi herself provided the answer when she reiterated recently that the aim of her Government was to ensure "improvement in the quality of programmes" but that the broadcasting agencies should stay under the control of the Government. However, the election manifesto of the Congress(I), Mrs Gandhi's triumphant party, despite paying lip-support to the freedom of the press, did not contain a word about AIR and Doordarshan. Later on, the media advisory committee was appointed, headed by former diplomat and Mrs Gandhi's freewheeling aide G. Parthasarthy to advise the Government on bringing about structural changes in radio, television and film units "under the ministry of I&B". "Under" is really the catch-22 word, and the Parthasarthy Commission's brief falls far short of removing it.

Yet Sathe's money-making promises are a shade starry-eyed, if not prone to disastrous consequences. The stations, the lone network and the main producers of programmes—the entire network—are all under the sprawling umbrella of the Doordarshan administration. The obvious pitfall for a monopoly television agency trying to commercialise itself is that abdicate its social responsibility. Yet are not incompatible ends. Some of successful TV around the entertaining and educative, a work of education, information and tainment.

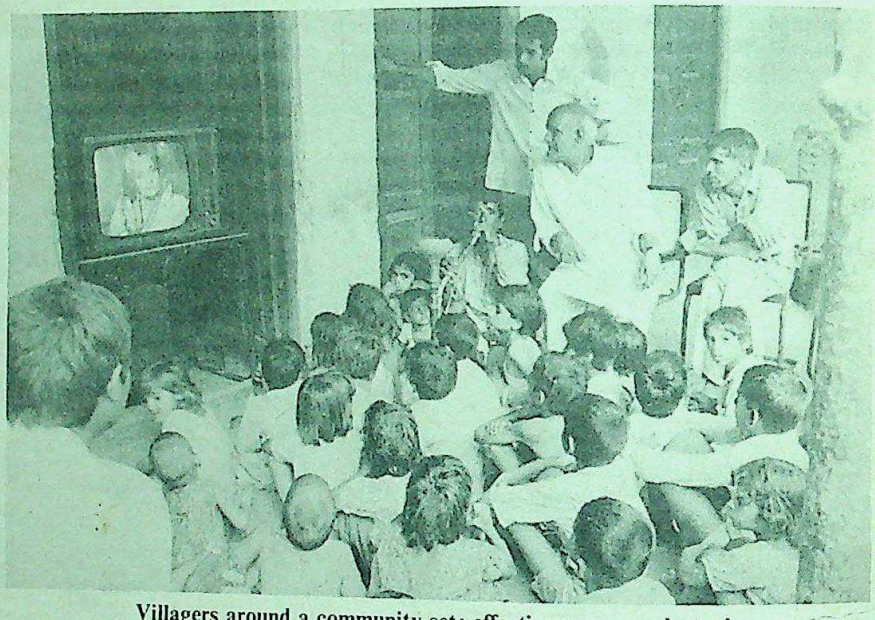
Forgotten Promises: The Committee, in its marathon two report showed the way for broadcasting viable without surrend basic obligation to the soc recommended the creation autonomous corporation, Akash and suggested that the freed broadcasting should be regarded as of expression and be enshrined Constitution as a part of the catch-a 19 (A). How very Janata ment which a the Verghese mittee went its promise brought bef Parliament a down version committee's r

Apparent tical parties tend to part w trol over m important a and TV. La night, when tish Foreign S Francis Pym cribbed abo British Broa Corporation showing the tine viewpoint in its coverag south Atlantic war, the BBC Director, Richard Francis, quietly him that "it is not the BBC's role British troops' morale or to rall people to the flag."

For the babus filling the co Doordarshan, such sentiments will beyond comprehension. Said N.L head of the television working gro Government-appointed Media Committee: "The present Gov never pledged to make broad autonomous; so this is not even considered at any level."

Against such a bleak backgro commercial push of Doordarshan eventually throw up the Hobson's between the video ghosts of Mangeshkar or Mrs Gandhi. Sathe best splash them in the lurid colours own fantasy.

—SUMIT MITRA and ANITA K



Villagers around a community set: effective propaganda tool

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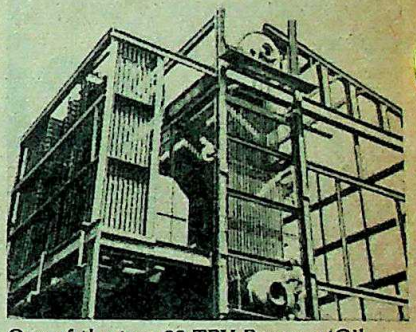

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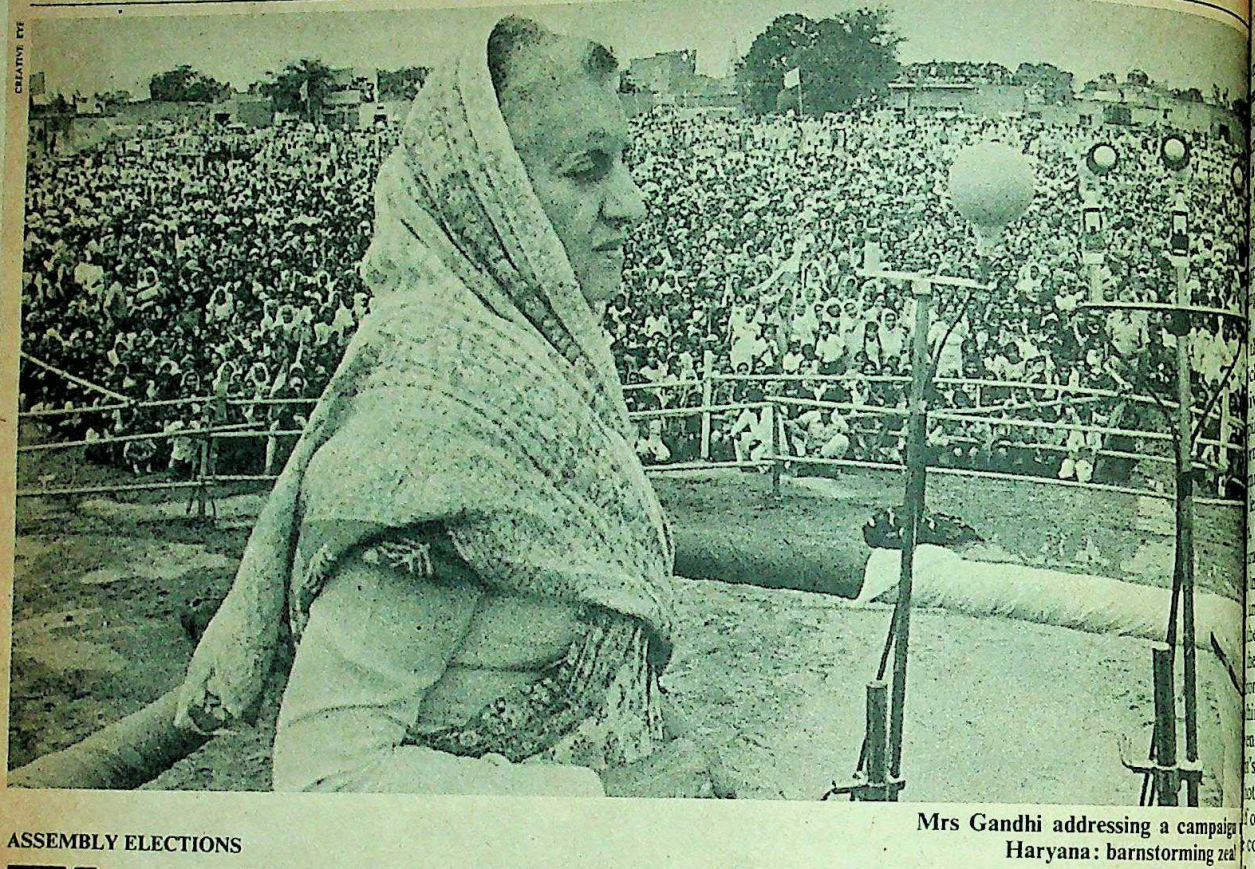

Mrs Gandhi addressing a campaign in Haryana: barnstorming zeal

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

The Acid Test

ELECTION fever reached its zenith in the far-flung states of West Bengal, Kerala, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh last fortnight as political workers of all colours fanned out in search of votes. The stakes were particularly high for the ruling party of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who faces the biggest test of popularity since her resounding victory at the polls in January 1980. Up for grabs are 607 Assembly and seven Lok Sabha seats. An unprecedented 3,340 candidates have entered the election fray.

The ruling party has made no effort to hide the immense importance it attaches to the forthcoming contest. Mrs Gandhi herself spearheaded the campaign by barnstorming all the four states and addressing scores of public meetings. Close on the heels of the prime minister was her son Rajiv Gandhi—who faces the first big test of his organisational skills. Between the two of them, they must have addressed over 100 meetings attended by over 2 crore people. The Congress(I) headquarters at 24, Akbar Road and 1, Safdarjung Road—the prime minister's official residence—were a beehive of activity. A dozen MP's led by confidant Arun Nehru kept tabs on all state capitals through hot line connections. Besides, an additional batch of 350 MP's, 100 state ministers and 40 Central ministers were dispatched to the scene of contest to canvass for votes.

Logistics: While the ruling party heavyweights were away campaigning in the various states, those in charge in New Delhi took care of all the logistics from providing finances, transport and publicity material to making arrangements for the use of muscle power, if required. The Congress(I) machinery functioned as though it was launching a new product in the market. Unlike in the past, a compact group of trusted people was given the job of collecting funds and distributing them amongst the Congress(I) candidates through 20-odd observers. Instructions were sent out to the various state units restraining them from collecting money for poll purposes. However, Haryana was an exception, with the versatile Chief Minister Bhajan Lal making sure that none of the 40 Congress(I) candidates suffered from lack of funds.

Transport arrangements were by far the most organised. Though over 5,0[illegible] were arranged through friendly co[illegible] industries, their constituency-wise d[illegible] was made in New Delhi. The tr[illegible] in-charge—a former defence em[illegible] handled the job meticulously since [illegible] looked after the same department d[illegible] 1977 and 1980 elections. However, [illegible] impediment in the arrangements of [illegible] ing party was the West Bengal [illegible] Government which impounded 50 [illegible] tered jeeps allegedly meant for Co[illegible] candidates in the state.

Not to be outdone in what has [illegible] to be an increasingly costly *tamash* [illegible] the opposition leaders who, except [illegible] Marxists in West Bengal, have been [illegible] in the wings to take a big swipe [illegible] Congress(I)'s stranglehold. Leaders [illegible] Behari Vajpayee (BJP), Charan Sing[illegible] Dal), L.K. Advani (BJP), Devraj Ur[illegible] nataka Kranti Ranga), Jyoti Basu ([illegible] Chandra Shekhar (Janata) and M[illegible] Desai (Janata) were also hot on the [illegible] paign trail covering as much as 10,00[illegible] To date, an estimated Rs 15 crore has [illegible] spent by the various parties. A ve[illegible] armada of 10,000 cars and jeeps, a [illegible] dozen helicopters and aeroplanes has [illegible] pressed into service to woo a[illegible] crore voters scattered over the four [illegible] Quipped a media executive: "I [illegible] realised that elections have become

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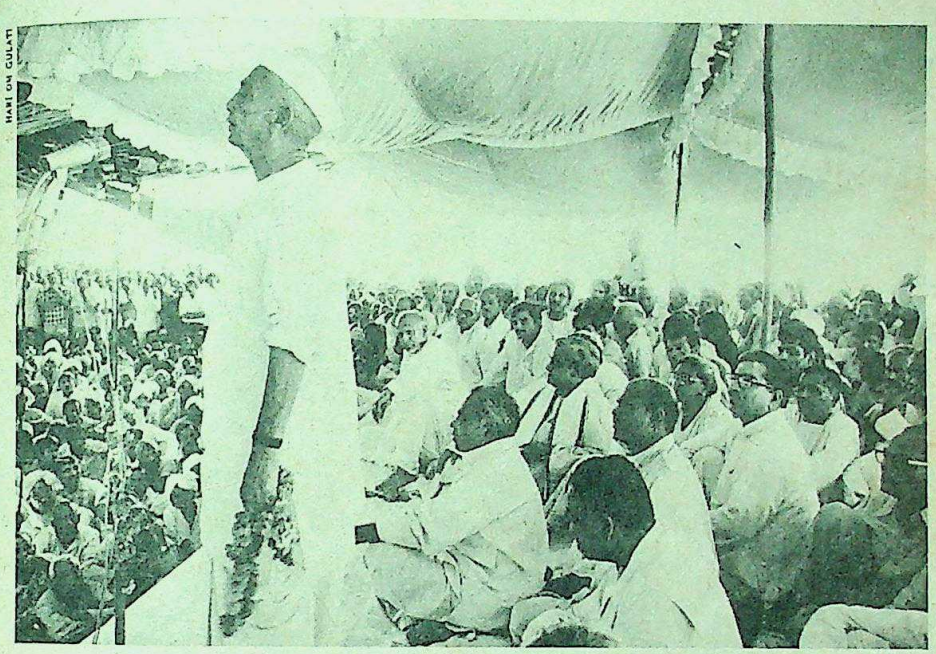
...ating business."

...ious: Campaign rhetoric—as ...s occasions—has often bordered ...monious. The ruling party has ... defensive stance—a significant ... from the 'vote for a government ... slogan that toppled the Janata ...80. No doubt, the new posture of ...ress(I) has ...pted by the ... and vocal ...the Opposi... ...ch—though ...ivided—has ...ing on the ...rmance of ...ment. Said ...eader Cha... champion ...al masses: ...n Bombay, ...nd Madras ...ter to know ...eir food ...m... They ...thing of sp... ...m Rs 1,000 ...'s stay in a ...otel when ...f of the peo... ...country do ... half the ... spend in a ...



Charan Singh on the campaign trail in Haryana: aggressive tactics

...rime minister also spared no ef... ...denigrate the Opposition. After ...fears that the West Bengal polls ...e free and fair, she later told an ...ally in Haryana somewhat fa... "In their unrelenting bid to finish ...al life, the Janata Government had ...e with stealing two hens and six ...

...g Godmen: However, in the mad scramble for votes, no stone has been left unturned. Candidates in the various constituencies of Himachal Pradesh faced the daunting prospect of having to convince godmen—who have tremendous sway over the common man—to vouch for them. Says a Congress(I) candidate: "My survival is linked not with the amount of work I have done but with the amount of offerings given to these self-proclaimed ambassadors of God."

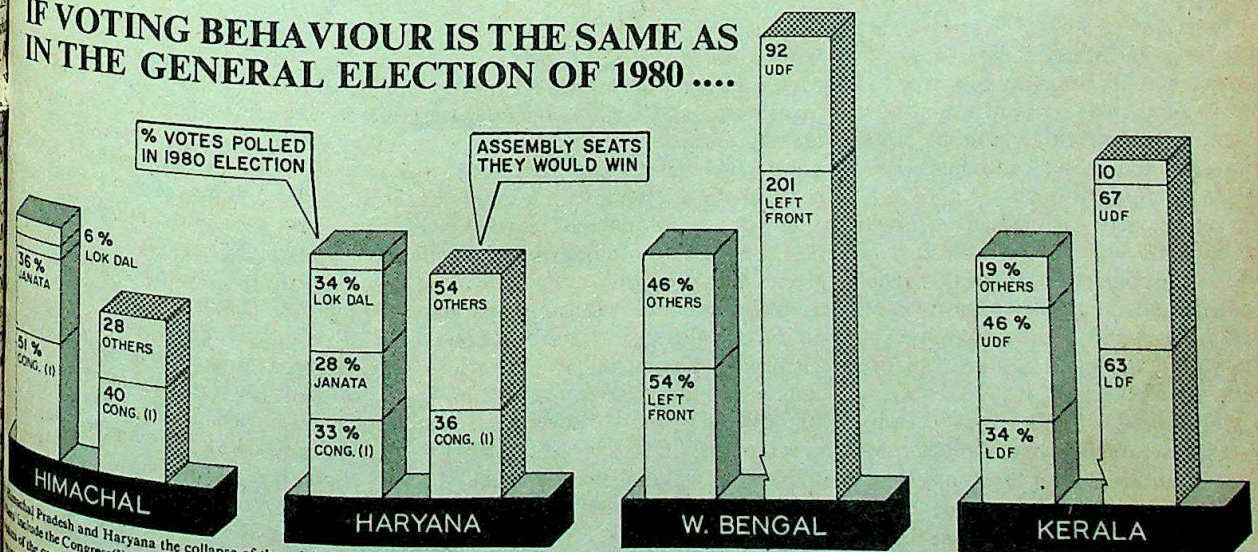
Even in the former Marxist-ruled Kerala, Mrs Gandhi, accompanied by over a dozen Congress(I)-led United Democratic Front (UDF) leaders, including former chief minister Karunakaran, visited the Shree Krishna temple in Guruvayoor to influence religiously inclined voters as well as to seek comment on the poll prospects of the Congress(I), Mrs Gandhi remarked brusquely: "In the last 35 years, one thing I have never done is to try to forecast an election result."

Verdict: Speculation apart, if the voters repeat the choices they made in the 1980 parliamentary elections, Mrs Gandhi's party will lose the elections in Haryana and West Bengal and win in both Kerala and Himachal Pradesh (*see chart*).

Mrs Gandhi's attempt to improve her party's strength in Kerala and West Bengal and retain power in both Himachal Pradesh and Haryana is only understandable, considering that the presidential elections are round the corner. If she loses badly in all the four states, she may have to compromise on the choice of a new President. Besides, her moral authority to rule over her party will be greatly eroded. The dissidents may very well launch a campaign against Rajiv Gandhi by holding him responsible for the party's rout. Conversely, if she wins in three of the states, she may not only go in for a mid-term poll for Parliament in order to change its Sanjay-dominated complexion, but also to select a President of her own choice. Only what happens on May 19 will provide the final verdict.

—PRABHU CHAWLA

IF VOTING BEHAVIOUR IS THE SAME AS IN THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1980 ....



Himachal Pradesh and Haryana the collapse of the original Janata Party makes it impossible to distribute seats among the Opposition parties on the basis of the 1980 voting pattern. In West Bengal they are outside the Congress(I) and its allies. In Kerala the composition of the CPI-M-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) and the Congress(I)-led United Democratic Front (UDF) has changed. The LDF now consists of the CPI-M, CPI, All India Muslim League, the official Janata Party and a faction of the Revolutionary Socialist Party. The UDF cosists of the Congress(I), the two groups of the Kerala Congress, the Janata group of the Congress(S), the Indian Union Muslim League and the breakaway faction of the Janata Party.

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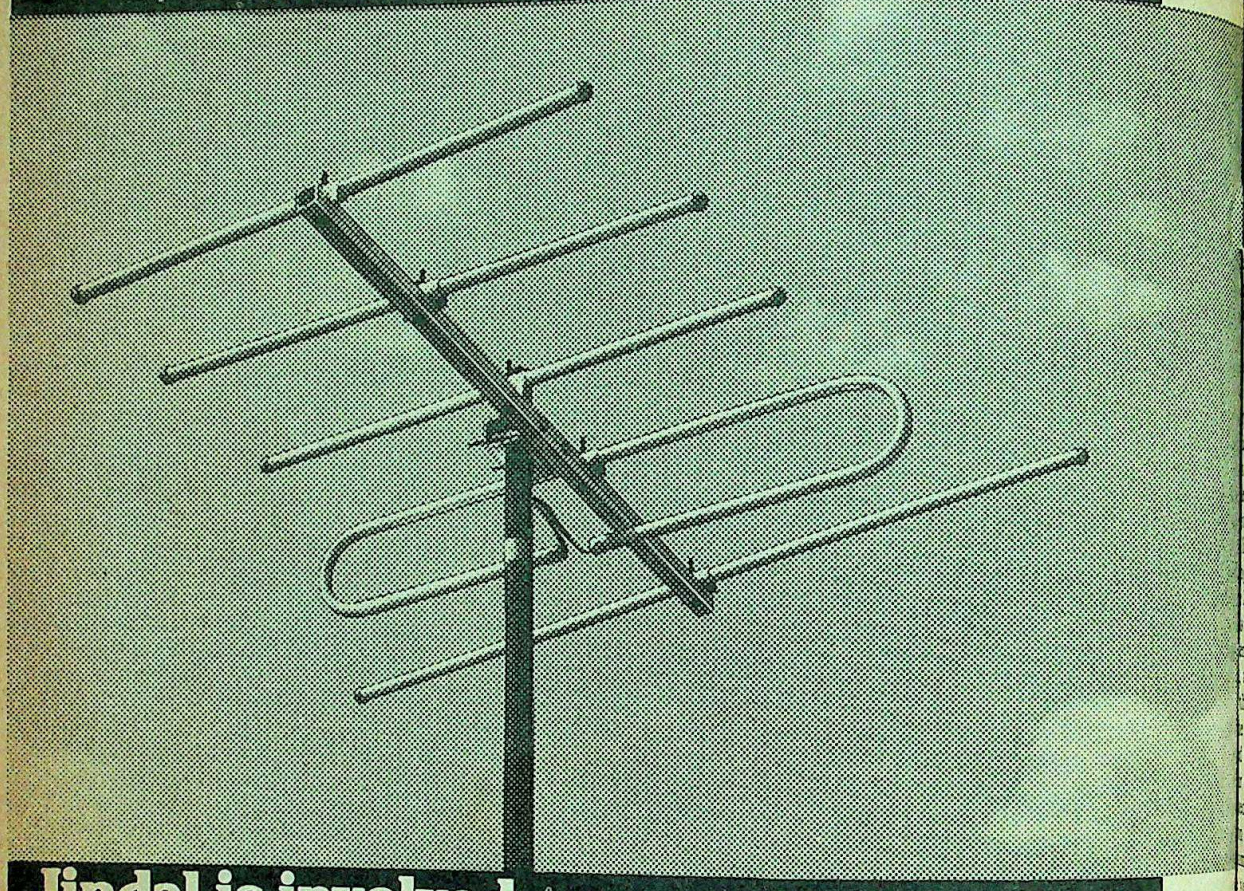
WHEN ENTERTAINMENT ENTERS THE HOME



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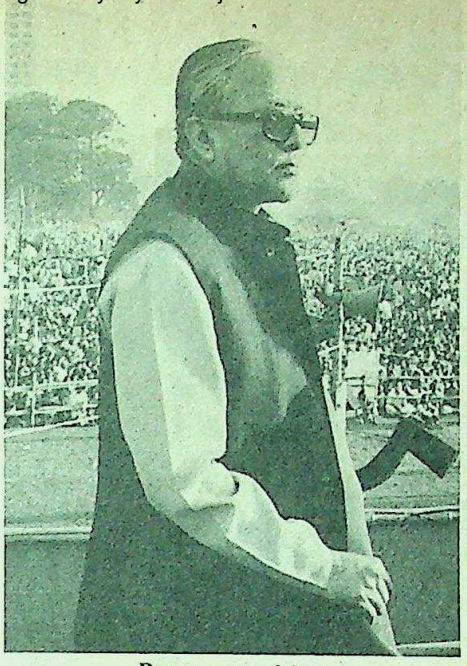
NGAL

ft On Top

THE CONGRESS(I) election machinery, which appeared to have become grounded forever, just about managed to take off following Indira Gandhi's whirlwind tour of West Bengal. ew over the length and breadth of in her Air Force helicopter, ques- e once again being asked whether leave in her wake a wave, if not h to see her party back in office, fficient to carry a fair number to . Heavily dependent for their the prime minister's charisma, en in West Bengal started specu- fortnight about bagging around This would not only mean a con- eduction in strength of the ruling t but also a loss of face as its e Promode Das Gupta, have been that the Front would get more 34 it won five years ago when the had won in only 20 of the 294 ecies.

as things stood less than a fortnight e May 19 speculation to be rather one thing, it on the as- that in a mber of pla- ery sight of der would ple in favour Congress(I). at actually was differ- Diamond for instan- addressed a n audience clearly was erested in her than in her hose frequent references to the ernational situation and dangers right reaction were hardly of ance to an essentially rural crowd imary concern is how to grow a op. Even then the party could have apitalise on her visit, but this was far too strenuous a task for an con continuing to suffer from a k of discipline.

atisfaction: Almost a stone's throw m Diamond Harbour is Satgachhia, ency from where Marxist Chief Jyoti Basu is seeking re-election for



TARUN CHAKRAWARTI

Basu: easy wicket

the second time. He is being opposed by Dinabandhu Bairagi, a local man selected by the Congress(I), and even 10 days before the elections Bairagi's posters were hard to come by though Basu's name glittered on every wall. Bairagi's men were clearly not keen on the job as money had been slow to reach them from Calcutta—each Congress candidate has been allotted Rs 40,000 which was being doled out in instalments, much to the dissatisfaction of many.

BIKASH DAS

Election graffiti in Calcutta: foregone conclusion for the Left Front

Basu had won by a margin of 38,000 in 1977 and this time his campaign managers hope to add another 10,000 to the difference. The chief minister himself has addressed only one election meeting in his constituency having been busy in the rest of the state and also Kerala. Next to Basu the most sought after speaker in the Left Front this time is Finance Minister Ashok Mitra, fighting it out again from the middle class-dominated Calcutta constituency of Rash Behari Avenue. Initially, there were doubts about Mitra's future, particularly as in the last Lok Sabha elections the Marxist candidate had fared badly in this segment and Mitra did not exactly become popular with his action against Sanchaita Chit Fund, which has left a large number without their easy money every month.

Yet the infighting in the Congress(I), which led to the selection of Haimi Bose, a doctor and former communist who was expelled from the CPI-M, has done the finance minister a world of good, particularly as a fair number of Congress(I) workers are showing no interest in working for the party candidate. True, Mitra continues to face tricky questions on the Sanchaita issue but even then the excellent organisation of his party and popular disgust at the openly bickering Congressmen should see him through. In a constituency where personality considerations also count to a fair extent, Mitra also enjoys an added advantage by virtue of his reputation as a brilliant student and writer.

Blatant Bickering: While throughout the state the Congress(I) continues to suffer from infighting, nowhere perhaps is it so blatant as in the North Calcutta constituency of Jorabagan where party candidate Subrata Mukherjee faces a challenge not only from the Left Front but from Ila Roy, who only the other day belonged to the Congress(I) but turned rebel on failing to secure the ticket and went on to file her nomination with the support of the Janata. She is the widow of former Congress strongman Nepal Roy and her followers are on record that if Subrata Mukherjee wishes to induct musclemen from outside then they will teach him the lesson of his life. The questions being raised at Jorabagan last fortnight were related not so much to the outcome of the polls but to the possibility of a major showdown between official and rebel Congressmen.

Fears of trouble also persist in other parts of the state, particularly in districts like Bankura, Purulia and Midnapore where the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, an electoral ally of the Congress(I), has become fairly active recently, and in Nadia where Naxalites are again making their presence felt and are urging people to stay away from the polls. With these dangers in mind the state

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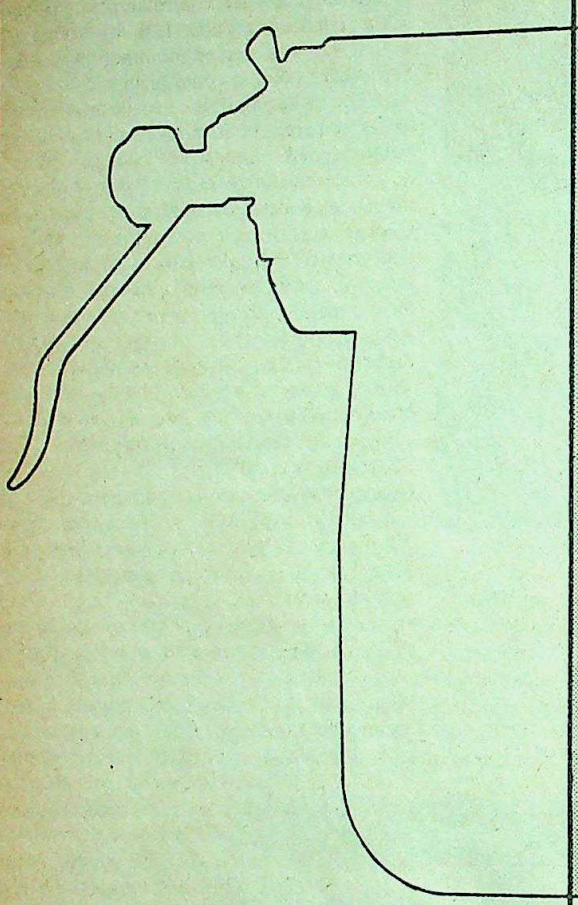

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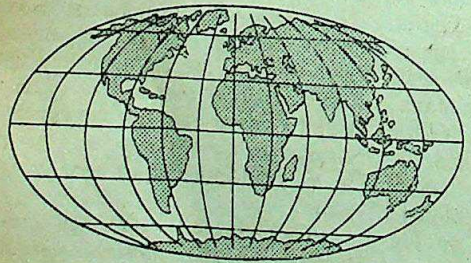

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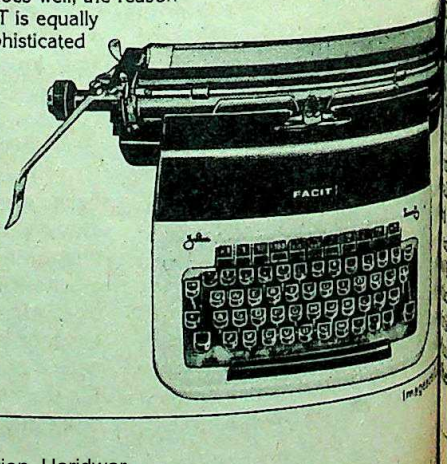

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Mrs Gandhi and Karunakaran (glasses) at a temple: grim fight.

...t had sought an additional 27 ...s of the Central Reserve Police ...s getting less than half of that. ...y, while Mrs Gandhi repeatedly ...ainst divisive forces in her West ...etings her state party had no ...allying with the Jharkhandis who ...urging tribals to wage a militant ...for a separate tribal state.

...way: Taking the state as a whole ...Front appears to be in total com... ...e four major industrial and agri... ...istricts west of the river Hooghly—Hooghly, Burdwan and Birbhum—Marxists' organisational strength ...rly commendable job done by the ...chayats leave little to fear from ...tion. In fact, in Burdwan Cong...wart Bhola Sen himself is in ...issing the bus this time. Sen had ...afer Calcutta seat for himself but ...eep pace with the wranglings over ...nstituencies and decided to take ...with his old seat.

...e rest of the state the Left Front ...ets of challenge posed not so much ...anised strength of the Opposition ...ividual popularity of candidates ...to those parties, particularly the ...). The Janata, the other party of ...ficance, is in far too great a sham... of any serious concern. And with ...lls in newspapers giving the Left ...ar edge over the others it appears ...mbined strength of the Oppo... ...continue to remain an insignifi...rity but with this vital difference: ...ber of the traditionally non-Left ...s the Janata had bagged five years ...this time go to the Congress(I).

—SUMANTA SEN

Bets

AS THE frenzied election campaign moves into the last lap, it would be a foolhardy man who offers odds on the winner in Kerala. The fast changing mosaic of electoral alliances means that the same as it was during the last The biggest fear at the moment is ...te is heading for another bout of ...stability.

...y it appeared that the Cong... ...United Democratic Front (UDF) ...dge in the contest. After all, the ...) had been able to gather on its ...ect parties representing the major ...es in the state, like the Indian ...slim League, the Kerala Congress ...e Kerala Congress (Joseph) and the National Democratic Party.

Constant Crises: The prolonged election campaign has, however, taken its toll. The UDF has lurched from crisis to crisis from the time they had to tackle the tricky issue of allotment of seats. At one time P.J. Joseph, the leader of the Kerala Congress(Joseph) group had threatened to walk out of the alliance as he felt that the rival faction of the Kerala Congress led by K.M. Mani had received preferential treatment. Two days before nominations closed, Joseph was pacified by the offer of the education and excise portfolio if the UDF came back to power. Not to be outdone, K.M. Mani staged a little rebellion of his own demanding at least one seat for his party in Alleppey district. Again the seats had to reshuffled between the constituents to appease Mani.

Then it was the turn of the Youth Congress(I) to complain that they had not been given their due. The state Youth Congress(I) President Mullapally Ramachandran objected to being put up for election in Nadapuram, a Marxist stronghold. He was hurriedly shifted to a safe seat, Chitoor, in adjoining Palghat district. This was not the end of Congress(I) leader K. Karunakaran's troubles with the youth wing of his own party. They also managed to scuttle the political hopes of his blue-eyed boy Krishna Kumar, chairman of the public sector Hindustan Latex Ltd, by seeing to it that he was denied nomination in the Trivandrum North constituency.

The bickering in the UDF has not added to its stature. As it is, the coalition's reputation had already been sullied by its desperate efforts to cling to power during the 80-day Karunakaran ministry. Says A.C. George, a former Union minister: "If we had gone to the polls within a month after the fall of the Nayanar ministry it would have been a landslide victory for the UDF." Adds George, whose brother A.C. Jose propped up the Karunakaran Government with his speaker's vote: "Every time my brother had to cast his vote, we lost a seat."

Sterile Issues: The UDF might have had better prospects if it was offering the electorate something new. Its main plank now is the sterile law and order issue. Says Karunakaran: "After two years of Marxist bloodbath the people want some peace."

However, the Congress(I)'s brief stint in power has made the electorate cynical about its claims. The Karunakaran ministry also managed to stir up a fair amount of resentment over its agricultural policies. Says former chief minister, E.K. Nayanar, of the Left Democratic Front (LDF): "The 80-day Karunakaran ministry was a blessing in disguise. It showed how weak and inefficient the UDF's agricultural policies are, which have left the farmers in the lurch." But though Nayanar does not mention it, the memories of the LDF are equally bitter.

If all these factors did not make matters complicated enough there is the additional question this time of what impact the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will have in its first major electoral foray in the state. The BJP is putting up candidates all over the state and may manage to shear away from the already slim margins that the UDF is hoping to get.

Weakened: It is the BJP which has forced Karunakaran to stand in two constituencies. In his old constituency, Mala, in Trichur district his position has been weakened by the presence of a BJP candidate, Shankaran Kutty and the veteran CPI leader, E. Gopalakrishna Menon, who is opposing Karunakaran, is confident of victory. He says: "Karunakaran has represented this constituency for donkey's years, yet this is the most underdeveloped area in Trichur district."

Karunakaran's campaign manager Devies Pereppadan, however, feels that his boss will win with the help of the Christian and Muslim votes. Karunakaran's chances are better in Nemom in Trivandrum district. In the last elections the Congress(I) candidate won by a margin of 7,277 votes. This

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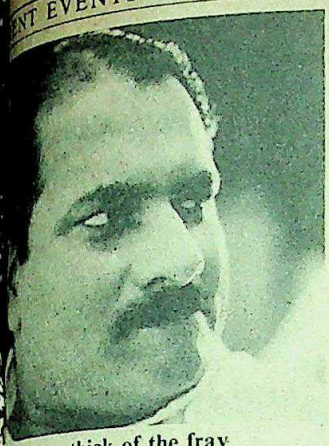


Antony: thick of the fray

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Caste Calculus

HER MESSAGE was loud and clear: "Opposition governments in the states tend to be non-cooperative with the Centre. Elect a government which is in tune with the Centre if you want your state to prosper." Thus Prime Minister Indira Gandhi warned a motley crowd of Congress(I) supporters, office-goers and tourists at Simla on May 4.

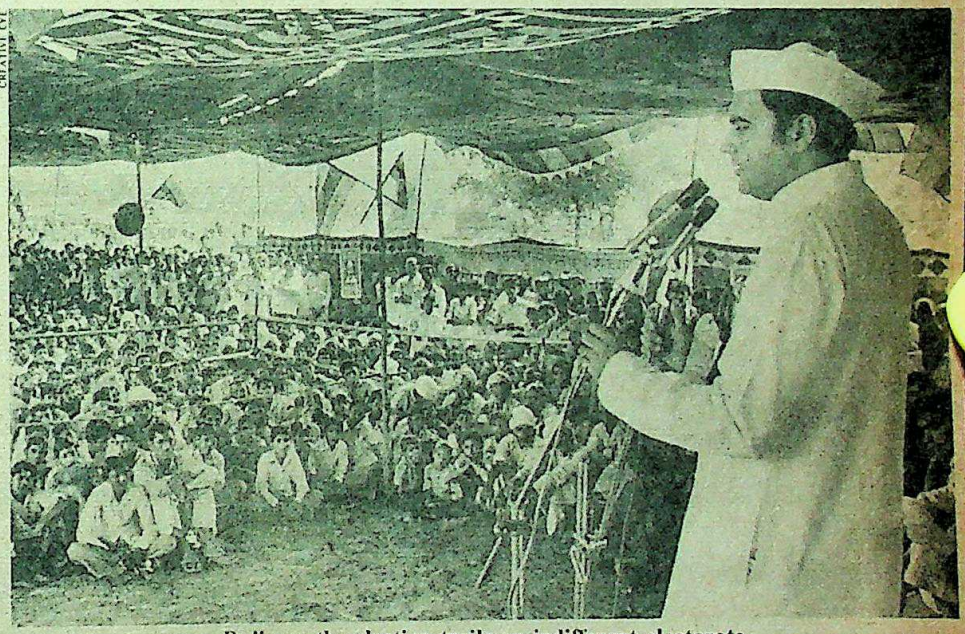
She repeated the caution to hillfolk in Nahan, Bilaspur and Una districts. At a thinly attended meeting at Una, she said, "The country is facing internal and external threats and opposition parties are endangering the country's unity." Gone are the days when Mrs Gandhi spoke of *garibi hatao* or "the government that works". Her line this time around is the straightforward declaration that no Opposition government can survive so long as she is at the Centre.

But neither Mrs Gandhi nor Rajiv nor any of the other party heavyweights touring the state seem to have impressed the electorate. Meetings have been scantily attended. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) General Secretary Lal Krishna Advani attracted only 200 people to his meeting at Kandaghat on the Kalka-Simla national highway. Ratan Chand, a dhaba owner in Hamirpur district, summed up popular sentiment succinctly: "All politicians are alike; election promises are never kept. Why should we bother?"

Candidates: For the 68-member house the Congress(I) has put up 67 candidates leaving Solan to the All India Communist Party. The BJP is contesting 67 seats and supporting an independent in Kinnaur. The Janata Party is fielding 50 and the Lok Dal 31 while the Communist Party of India has 20 candidates and the Communist Party of India-Marxist, four. The BJP-Lok Dal alliance was short-lived: while the BJP did not withdraw a single candidate, the Lok Dal, as per their agreement pulled out 24 from the fray. But now the Lok Dal is back and the two would-be allies are fighting each other in 31 constituencies.

Congress(I) citadels are also threatened by rebels. There are 24 of them including nine from the dissolved house. The defections which the ruling party engineered to usurp power in 1980 are now boomeranging: the 1977 loyalist Congressmen refuse to back defector candidates. Chief Minister Ram Lal, Himachal Pradesh Congress Committee(I) Chairman Sarla Sharma, Raja Virbhadra Singh and Vikram Mahajan are all working at cross purposes. Many of the rebel candidates tell voters that they are Mrs Gandhi's nominees.

Government employees are another headache for the ruling party. The deaths of four employees in a police firing in 1980 is still well remembered in Mandi, Kangra and Hamirpur districts. The BJP controlled Non-gazetted Officers' Association is asking people to vote out the "killer government". Political activity by government employees is



Rajiv on the election trail: an indifferent electorate

ntly wide margin to ensure that the not spoil his chances. Karunakaran ever, messed up his own chances by uncalled for remarks comparing his nstituencies, Mala and Nemom. e said, was like his chaste wife and he ver forget her.

is prompted CPI strongman M.N. an Nair to ask: "If Mala is karan's chaste wife, Nemom is his ." Taking the cue from this, next walls of Nemom were smeared with tion: "Will Karunakaran be loyal to or to his mistress?"

sier Time: The other leaders in the e having an easier time than karan. Nayanar, who is standing alampuzha in Palghat district, faces eat from a relatively unknown rival Kerala Congress(Mani) group. The der O. Rajagopal is standing in town itself. Rajagopal could be one few BJP candidates to win. It is ed that the LDF is indirectly aiding backing a Congress(I) rebel.

one of the bitterest battles in the being fought out in Ernakulam where ala Pradesh Congress Committee(S) President, P.C. Chacko is clashing L. Jacob of the Congress(I). Chacko his former boss A.K. Antony some and his opponents are determined at him. Says one of Antony's present and men, Vayalar Ravi: "Chacko is ion we want to get."

s election day approaches the n is reaching fever pitch, and each is doing his own bit for victory. P.J. ings Christian devotional songs and film numbers. Karunakaran mo- n to Guruvayoor every other day e blessings of Lord Krishna. ies from outside the state like Mrs Jyoti Basu and Atal Behari e have visited the state. Despite all vour, the persisting fear is that er side wins, it will not survive very

—SREEDHAR PILLAI

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under the service's rules but the
et has not dared to take action.
nal Conflict: The parties are also
olitical capital out of the tension
the areas that comprised the old
and the areas belonging to
at were added to the state after
ition. Ram Lal promises the "old"
is that he will consolidate their
e Shanta Kumar, chief minister
e Janata regime, projects himself as
rtion of the new areas. BJP strength
ed in 35 Assembly segments in the
s while the Congress has an edge in
tituencies in "old" Himachal.
e, which previously played only a
role in the state's politics, has
factor even in the remote villages
ur, Lahaul and Kalpa districts. The
e is between Brahmin and Thakur
parties are trying to exploit this
very candidate has a detailed ana-
the caste composition of his con-
in order to play one caste against

ything can be said to be an issue in
chal elections it is the simple ques-
ether the voters will heed Mrs
's warning or use their votes to reject
n politics.

—GOBIND THUKRAL in Simla

NA

seemly ramble

VOTERS face a rather piquant situation in Haryana which elects its sixth Vidhan Sabha on May 19 in the 16 years of its existence. The motley line up of spendthrift political parties wracked rnecine battles has only succeeded rounding the average voter beyond e. The heterogeneous composition of torate in Haryana has injected a brand of election rhetoric. If the approaches the voter in the name of half-way partner, the Bharatiya Party (BJP) wants to save the cow in me of Hindus, while the 'secular' ss(I) uses whatever slogan suits its e. As far as election arithmetic is ed, the 70 lakh voters in Haryana are: Jats, 7.22 lakh Chamars, 5.33 lakh ins, 3.53 lakh Ahirs, 2.86 lakh as, 2.42 lakh Rajputs and 32.72 lakh

ne of the political parties contesting s has a unified image in Haryana. All the prominent leaders in the Congress(I)—Bhajan Lal, Bansi Lal, Rao Birendra Singh, Balwant Rai Tayal and Harpal Singh—command allegiance only within their respective groups. The Lok Dal and the cadre-based BJP are no better in this regard with rebel candidates cutting into each others' roots.

The vertical split is particularly evident in the leadership of the Congress(I). If the Bansi Lal faction has put up half a dozen candidates, the Bhajan Lal faction has gone one up by doubling the number of candidates. Bhajan Lal's thirst for the chief minister's chair has even compelled him to fund independent candiates in Narwana, Ambala Cantonment, Rohtak, Yamunanagar and many other constituencies. Tayal, a freedom fighter and Gandhian, is openly lending support to Janata and Lok Dal nominees in Hissar district because he was denied a party ticket by Mrs Gandhi. Congress(I) citadels in Mahendragarh district have also crumbled in the wake of a tussle for Ahir lordship.

Confusion: The Opposition alliance of the Lok Dal and BJP is characterised by the absence of any coordinated effort. The Janata Party is trying to bite more than it can chew by contesting 54 seats. Janata leaders stress their desire to "show BJP its place". The Congress(J) which is contesting 58 seats is only adding its mite to the prevailing confusion in the Opposition camp.

Of special interest is the constituency of Adampur from where Bhajan Lal is seeking re-election. His chief rival is the Lok Dal nominee, Nar Singh Bisnoi—a young lawyer from Hissar. Lal's followers admit that it won't be a cakewalk for the chief minister. It is obvious that he is not admired by all the people of Adampur. Says Ram Prakash, 50, a farmer in Chaudhrywas village: "Bhajan Lal is a broker for the rich who has done nothing for the peasants. We will give our *parchi* to the Lok Dal candidate." Elsewhere, Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee(I) President Harpal Singh is facing a tough challenge from Lok Dal-supported independent, Besakhi Ram Gupta. Ironically, Singh is not getting any help from Bhajan Lal. The Congress(I) nominee Haraswarup Bura, a former Lok Dal MLA who defected to Bhajan Lal's camp, tells his supporters: "If Mrs Gandhi makes a single tour, it will bring me victory."

Campaign tactics include coercive measures by a jittery Congress(I) caretaker government on a pliant bureaucracy. At a "workers meeting" on May 8 at Kaithal, INDIA TODAY was witness to the ludicrous scene of Bhajan Lal sitting on a makeshift dais while Kurukshetra Deputy Commissioner R.P. Sharma sat on a chair nearby accepting job applications—promising 'instant' employment.

Extraordinary: The ruling party's fears in Haryana have only been confirmed by the extraordinary manner in which the campaign has been conducted. Mrs Gandhi addressed 23 meetings in over 35 constituencies on May 9 and 10, the first time a prime minister has gone from constituency to constituency canvassing for votes for an Assembly election.

Bhajan Lal weighed in coins: balancing act

At a meeting in Bhiwani district on May 6, a defiant Jat audience refused to listen to Chief Minister Bhajan lal with Rajiv Gandhi looking on. Rajiv dropped Bhajan Lal like a hot potato for the remaining lap of his election tour. In the Opposition camp, Devi Lal, whose suspension orders were revoked by Charan Singh, never addressed a single meeting along with the Lok Dal leader, leaving voters to draw their own conclusions about their strained relationship.

Voter attitude in general has been lukewarm at best. Says Nathu Ram Jain, 35, an income tax lawyer at Tosham: "Politics is

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business, it is for the vested interests to bother about it." Chanan Ram, 60, a petrol station manager, underscored the general mood of apathy when he said: "Who is interested in elections except youngsters who want a joy ride in the jeeps and trucks or those who have an axe to grind at one point or another."

The expense ceiling of Rs 30,000 prescribed by the Election Commission is farcical. "This sum is not even peanuts," admit leaders like Tayal and Bhajan Lal. Though no one is prepared to hazard a guess on the final outcome of the polls, it is evident that Haryana's voters can make a significant impact on the popularity—or lack of it—of the ruling party of Mrs Gandhi.

—GOBIND THUKRAL in Chandigarh

GARHWAL

Bahuguna's Blitz

IF POLITICS is the art of deception, the Congress(I) symbolises its highly developed state. After crying itself hoarse about its inability to conduct the Garhwal Lok Sabha by-election, the ruling party in Uttar Pradesh seems on the surface surprisingly resigned to the victory of its *bête noire*, Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna, 63, president of the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP). There is no show of strength of the kind witnessed when the by-election was first held on June 14 last year, with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the chief ministers of Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh pitching into the electioneering, and policemen from neighbouring Congress(I)-ruled states flooding the remote hill-bound constituency. The only VIP to make the trek to Garhwal last fortnight was Union Home Minister Giani Zail Singh who flew in and out in a one-day lightning visit. May 19, polling date, will fall exactly two years after Bahuguna resigned his Lok Sabha seat after quitting the Congress(I). In every way, the by-election has become his biggest political battle so far; his opponent Chandra Mohan Singh Negi, Uttar Pradesh's minister for hill development, is only a front for Bahuguna's real rival—Mrs Gandhi herself.

Well-organised: Yet Mrs Gandhi is tenacious when it comes to combating her political foes, and it seems inconceivable that she will let Garhwal go to Bahuguna without further ado. This time she is relying on her party's youth brigades. Hundreds of young men of the Youth Congress(I) have stormed the towns in Pauri and Chamoli districts. Under the supervision of State Irrigation and Transport Minister Veer Bahadur Singh and party leader Dharam Vir in Lucknow, Youth Congress(I) chieftains Sanjay Singh and Suresh Ajmani have set up base in Dehra Dun, and the khadi-clad boys have been furiously plastering posters, yelling slogans, and literally painting the towns' walls red with their theme line: 'Jai Indira, Jai Garhwal'.

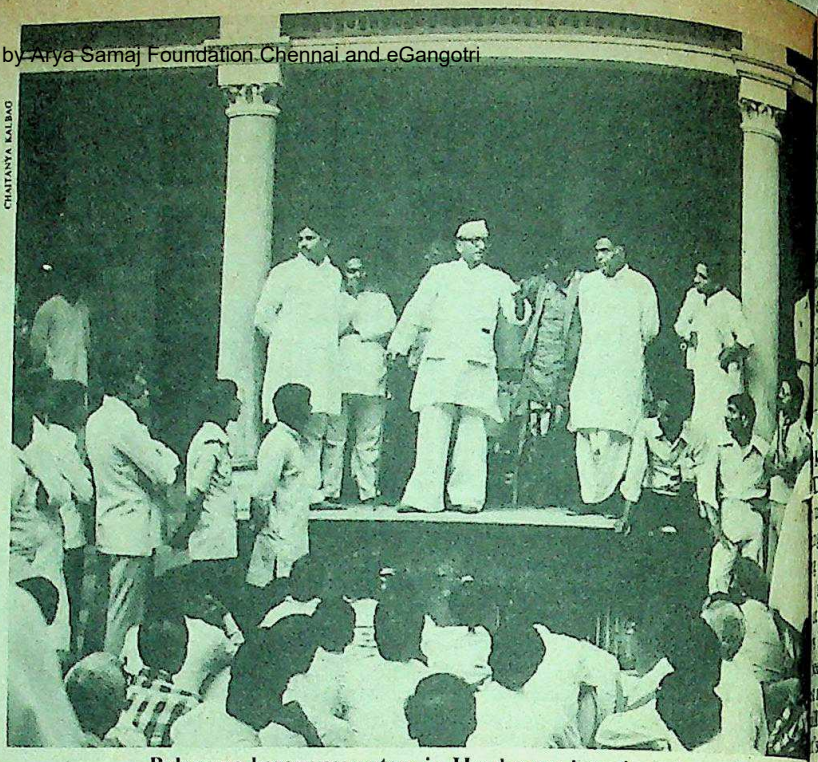
In addition, the state Government sent in 9,000 men of the police and the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC). Just outside Rishikesh sprawls a huge PAC camp, the transit point for truck-loads of rifle-toting PAC jawans headed for the constituency's 871 polling stations. This time, the Government has obviously learnt the lessons of June 1981, when police from Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab were sent in without the knowledge of the Chief Election Commissioner Sham Lal Shakdher who delivered the ruling party a resounding if unexpected snub when he ordered a repoll. Shakdher found *prima facie* evidence to support Bahuguna's complaint that Haryana and Punjab police personnel had intimidated voters and even participated in booth-capturing. The irregularities were later confirmed by a 3-member team of the Citizens for Democracy (CFD) led by veteran journalists Ajit Bhattacharjea and B.G. Verghese.

Understandably, then, Bahuguna is inclined to endow his campaign liberally with hyperbole. The Garhwal poll, he late evening crowd in Rishikesh, is as h as Jallianwalla Bagh or Champaran. symbol is the *tarazu*, the scales of justic Mrs Gandhi's symbol is the hand, w five fingers unequal in length. Fro expect only injustice and imbalance." typical day, meetings become tedio repetitive and the ennui in his ent tends to grow.

Dull Campaign: Nor does Bahug rhetoric liven up things much. His ther almost calculated to dull his listener root cause of the country's bad state, one day, is coal, and goes on to bera Gandhi for not spending even two da coal-mine. India is selling out t (International Monetary Fund) IMF exporting non-renewable resources li ore and bauxite. Taking leave of m issues, Bahuguna occasionally harang authorities for doing nothing to incre milk yield of Garhwal's diminutive co

Bahuguna's electoral road show party, is a one-man affair. Bahugu has not fully healed from a fracture s in September last year, and the walki he carries lends him a certain k raffishness. Accompanied only by a va an armed bodyguard, the martyr of longest-ever electoral battle travels in Ambassador, a tin trunk and a perched on its roof. Bahuguna travels and the dandy in him sees to it th liberally supplied with starched clothes and caps.

Negi, who was elected to the Pradesh Assembly from Lansdowne



CHAITANYA KALBAG

Bahuguna harangues voters in Hardwar: rhetoric and ennui

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UDAIPUR

Personality Factor

A WEEK before polling date in this picturesque town of lakes, palaces and forts, Udaipur seemed unusually quiet for a Lok Sabha constituency in the midst of a fierce by-election campaign. The Udaipur seat—one of the two in Rajasthan facing a by-election—has a mixed political history, with both the erstwhile Jan Sangh and Congress(I) retaining their hold alternately. In the Janata wave of 1977, Janata candidate Bhanu Kumar Shastri won the seat; three years later, Udaipur reverted to Congress(I) with Mrs Gandhi's landslide victory. But the thumping majority of 51,897

HARI OM GULATI

Bhandari: better known

votes had something to do with her candidate Mohanlal Sukhadia's personal charisma as well.

Sukhadia, former chief minister of Rajasthan and later governor of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, died in February this year, vacating a seat for which his party has been hard-pressed to find as eminent a successor. Their selection: a quiet, unassuming local-level politician called Deenabandhu Verma, 43, whose only claim of closeness to the power-centre is that he happens to be Rajasthan Chief Minister Shiv Charan Mathur's brother-in-law, may not cut much ice aganist a powerful Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate.

The BJP has fielded one of their longest-standing party functionaries, Sunder Singh Bhandari, who not only happens to be a native of the city, but was a Rajya Sabha member till he lost his seat last term. Confident of his public image in the city, the soft-spoken, bespectacled Bhandari said on election eve: "The personality factor which worked to Sukhadia's advantage in 1980 could prove the biggest thing in my favour."

Crucial Factor: Though Bhandari is by far the best-known candidate in the city, Udaipur constituency covers a large tract of rural populace, covering some 3,000 villages and an electorate that approximates 7.5 lakh voters. Clearly if the vote among the Rajputs in the constituency, numbering some 19,000, is divided to the ultimate advantage of the Congress(I), it is because the two main opposition parties, the BJP and the Janata Party (JP) have been unable to resolve their differences and together combat the ruling party.

Earlier in the election it was rumoured that the JP candidate Kalyan Singh Kalvi would withdraw in favour of the BJP to ensure its lead. But the idea of such a reconciliation has come to nothing. Says a disgruntled Congress(I) worker of his party's prevailing chances: "It's still going to be a tough fight. Our party should have known better than picking the chief minister's brother-in-law. They should have picked a member of Sukhadia's family—that would have had much more effect." Although former chief minister of the state Harideo Joshi is orchestrating the Congress(I) campaign, dissension in the ranks of the ruling party is in part provoked by other disgruntled leaders who were till not so long ago part of Jagannath Pahadia's outsize ministry. They have now washed their hands of the campaign. This has further weakened the Congress(I)'s chances—but the crucial factor the way Udaipur votes will depend on the swing among the majority of Rajputs.

—SUNIL SETHI in Udaipur

THANE

Samant's Folly

IT WAS probably the greatest miscalculation of his meteoric career. Pitting himself against the highly organised might of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the ruling Congress(I), labour militant Dr Datta Samant spent the past fortnight in a hectic campaign for the key Lok Sabha by-election in Thane near Bombay. The unionist's white Premier and Ambassador were familiar sights in the industrial belt and borrowed Matador vans and jeeps toured the constituency with pos-

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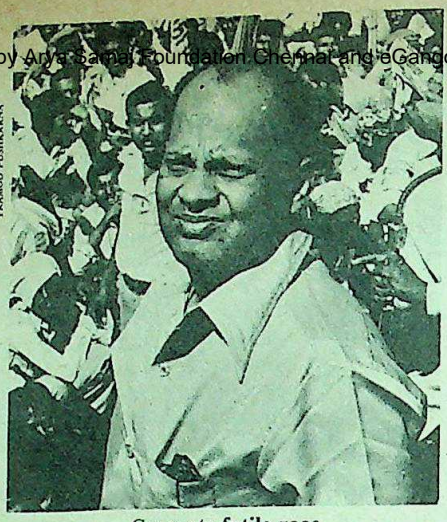
ters depicting the chubby doctor and his clenched fist on a smokestack symbol. Samant spent much of every day in the factories he controls, lecturing the workmen on the betrayal of the working class by the ruling party.

But the laws of probability weighed heavily against him. Only a month before by-election day on May 19, a Samant-sponsored Maharashtra Bandh fell flat on its face because people in Thane and Bombay refused to stay away from work. The make-up of Thane's voting population: only 10 per cent of the 9.25 lakh voters are industrial workmen, 2 lakh are rural and a large majority are middle class commuters who work in nearby Bombay. This makes it unlikely that the anti-establishment unionist will cut any ice with voters. Perhaps realising the futility of his campaign, Samant himself was back-pedalling by the fortnight's end: "My supporters are very staunchly behind me, but what do these chaps know about canvassing for votes? It's one thing to shout 'Datta Samant Zindabad', but if I am to win an election I need people who can actually convince every householder."


PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

Samant: futile race

No Cakewalk: The BJP, meanwhile, were pouring in everything they had in a bid to retain the seat which was vacated last March by the death of BJP member Ram K. Mhalgi. Over 6,000 cadre workers were spread out in the five municipalities and coastal areas that make up the constituency. Combating a Congress(I) fragmented by dissension between candidate Prabhakar Hegde and the Antulay-backed Bha Vartak (also from Thane), BJP leade confident they would win at the po not going to be a cakewalk," said Ra president of the Bombay unit of the "but we will win hands down."

But the BJP campaign belied th placence. Every available worker Bombay and Pune was brought to T canvass and party leaders came in dr make campaign speeches. On May President Atal Behari Vajpayee mad long visit to the constituency, spea packed public meetings at six differe till well past midnight. Vajpayee Indira rantings drew a post-midnigh running into thousands in Thane, T sure that things would go their way, th last fortnight lined up support from Pawar's Congress(S), the Bukhari fa the Muslim League, and the Harijan Republican Party and Dalit Panther BJP candidate Jagannath Patil, 32, w worked under Mhalgi for years, this g could prove a killing combination.

—CHANDER UDA

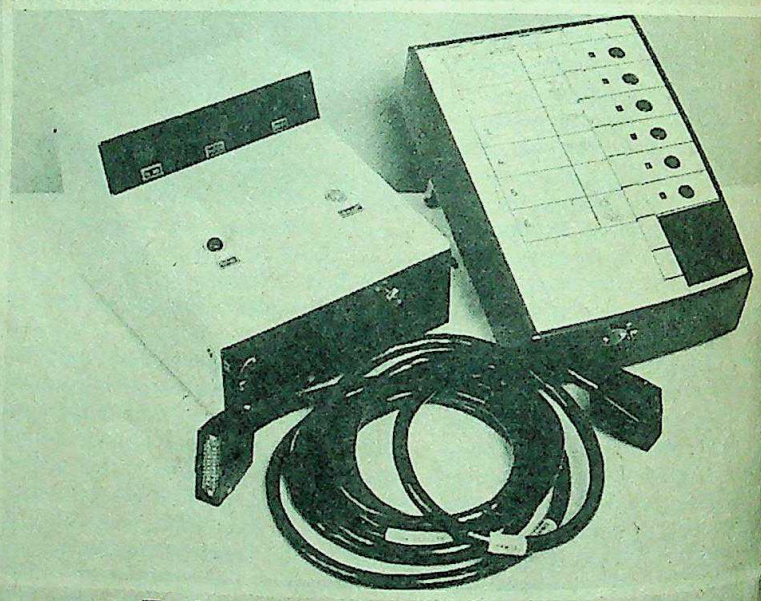
VOTING MACHINES

Instant Answer

NORTH Parur in Ernakulam district attracts attention, not only because the controversial Speaker of the Assembly, M.C. Jose, is seeking re-election from here, but also because for the first time in India the electronic vote-casting machines will be used here. In half the number of booths in this constituency of small farmers and coir workers the traditional ballot boxes will, however, be there as a standby. North Parur is the smallest electorate in Kerala which consists of only 80,144 voters.

The voting machine is based on the microprocessor technology prevalent in many countries. It is manufactured by Bharat Electronics Limited, Bangalore. The machine consists of two parts: the controlling unit and the ballotting unit. The controlling unit will be with the presiding officer. It is first connected with a cable in the left-hand side compartment. There is an all-clear switch. When pressed before polling, the candidates and polling officers can see the all-clear sign which shows that no votes have been 'cast'. This compartment is then sealed with a cardboard inserted into the slot provided for the purpose.

Simple Operation: The ballotting unit contains the serial number, name and symbol of each candidate in English and Malayalam. On the left side there is an indicator lamp which comes on when the vote is cast. The voter has only to press the switch against the name of the candidate of his choice; the bulb next to the switch lights up, there is a beep and his work is over. A voter can press the button only once. After it is pressed, it automatically locks and can be released only if the presiding officer presses the 'ballot' switch.



The electronic voting machine: replacing ballot paper

The machine ensures cent per ce secrecy and eliminates invalid votes. E machine can indicate 9,999 votes. T result on each machine can be kno immediately; only the total in each boo has to be worked out later. The machi costs Rs 5,500. Apart from obviating t necessity of printing lakhs of ballot p pers, its greatest advantage is that declares instant results, cutting out suspense.

—SREEDHAR PILL

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orm Signals

CHHOTANAGPUR, the rugged but mineral-rich southern plateau of Bihar, is in the grip of a new wave of tribal unrest. While top officials, who are mostly outsiders and not tribals, with their ostrich-like posture, per- the fiction that the situation is not there are others who fear that an ype stir is in the making". They th apprehension the rapid rise of a p of leaders, young, educated and who have marched to the forefront rgent effort by tribal organisations litancy in the area.

evidence of growing unrest has iplying. On May 1, International ay, Ranchi was shut down by a total rganised by a new organisation, the agpur Sanskriti Suraksha Andolan e strike created chaos and wides- riety. Shopkeepers were allegedly forced to close their shops as the police stood by idly.

The strike came within days of a clash between an agitated mob and the police which resulted in the death of at least three persons. The police say they were forced to fire in self-defence when a violent crowd attacked and ransacked a police station at Mandar in Ranchi district. The trouble started when, amidst the celebrations of the traditional Janni Shikar festival, a 12-yearly event in which women don male attire and go hunting. Last month a group of Oraon girls went hunting near Sersa village and stayed there overnight. One of them was lured away by another tribal youth and allegedly raped.

The next morning the girls attacked his house. Attempts by a non-tribal zamindar, Udilal Nath Tiwary, to punish the rapist by imposing a fine were opposed by the police who held that Tiwary was running a parallel court. Bihar's Education Minister, Karam Chand Bhagat, who represents Mandar constituency was sent to pacify the area. He urged the police publicly to shed their uniforms for mufti, a political gimmick which according to one officer demoralised the police force.

Grave Portents: The incidents of the last few months make horrifying reading. In Singhbhum district, which is echoing with slogan the "Jai Jharkhand", over 16 rest houses of the forest department suspected to have been used for raping tribal girls have been destroyed by irate crowds. In the jungle areas of Gua, Tonta and Chakradharpur police and administration exist only in name. According to official sources, militant tribals had virtually established their rule over 35 villages in Saranda, Kolhan, Porhat and Chaibasa south divisions. Police Superintendent Randhir Verma just managed to escape a poison-tipped arrow which resulted in the police firing in Kuria village. Leaders in Chaibasa stated that half a dozen firings have taken place in villages in recent times.

Several development projects have been brought to a standstill, Sources said that the Centrally-sponsored Koel-Karo irrigation and power project had not got off the ground

Armed tribals in Chhotanagpur: a new militancy

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due to local people's anger at the lack of a rehabilitation scheme. Meanwhile the tribal workers who had worked enthusiastically for the construction of a microwave tower over the religiously important Sukunburu hills in Khunti subdivision, destroyed it overnight in March.

The Janni Shikar festival this year acquired a certain symbolism of tribal protest. When tribal women in male attire paraded the streets of Ranchi armed with conventional weapons, Shiboo Soren, the militant leader of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha warned that the entire administration would be paralysed if the Government failed to solve the problems of the area. Soren alleged that the present policy of the Government was aimed at destroying the tribal culture and economy in the name of industrialisation.

Non-tribals admit that high caste people are ruling the roost in villages. Said Ishwar Sahu, a basic schoolteacher near Mandar, "These zamindars including Tiwaris, Lalas, Sahus and Mishras are like social lepers. They are feudals and take advantage of the poverty of the Adivasis."

Tribal leaders lamented that though their region was covered under the schedule area for which the Governor was directly responsible neither he nor his advisory council had ever cared to look into their grievances. Most of the posts in administration, government or university are held by high caste people from north Bihar or outside. Tribal scholars argue that the Government derives two-thirds of its revenue from tribal regions but hardly spends one-fifth for their development.

Major Dislocation: Another estimate said that over the past 30 years, nearly half a million tribals had been displaced in order to set up different projects. Their main grievance was that these projects had no meaning for them. Rather, they proved a disaster for their economy and culture. On an average one lakh tribals, including young girls, migrate every month in search of jobs and they are in turn exploited.

Encouraged by stark poverty extremists are reportedly getting into the area. But a regional Congress(I) functionary feels that the present crisis is due to the Congress sell-out to the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha during the assembly elections. As a result of the alliance with Congress(I), the Morcha won 13 assembly seats in the entire region and became a force to reckon with. The Morcha later broke away from Congress(I) creating panic among the Congress(I) workers.

Yet the Government claims it has been paying special attention to the tribal regions. Their apathy is evident from the fact that the mini secretariat set up in Ranchi to deal with the grievances of the local people has been defunct. Further the Ranchi regional development authority has no vice-chairman for the past eight months. The tribal welfare research institute is yet to get off the ground.

The Government of Jagannath Mishra, which is widely accused of establishing a "Jharkhand" instead of Jharkhand found it difficult to defend the role of the administration when, on April 7, the state Assembly took up a special debate on the plight of the Adivasis. Observers said that it was a rare occasion when members, cutting across party lines, condemned the Government and supported the cause of the tribals. The much maligned minister, Bhagat, who intervened on behalf of the Government, charged the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha with inciting violence in the region.

Irrespective of government claims, uneasiness has permeated the entire region. As regional Congress(I) secretary Roshanlal Bhatia and Congress(I) MLA Mrs Muktidani Saubrui said, Chhotanagpur is sitting on the top of a volcano.

—FARZAND AHMED

WEST BENGAL

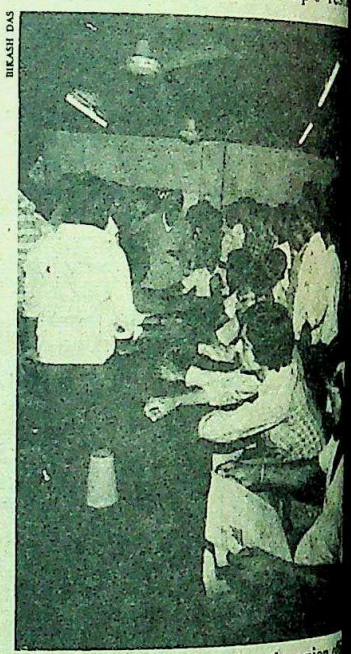
Fighting For Falkland

EVEN 35 years after Independence, ghosts from the colonial past seem to be hovering around the Indian subcontinent. This was underscored last fortnight when over 100 Indian seamen from the waterfront in Calcutta boarded the *EMS Uganda*—a hospital ship specially requisitioned by the British Government to lend support to its battling forces in the Falkland Islands. However unwittingly, the seamen were helping Great Britain fight its battles. The simple reason cited for taking up such a risky assignment: idleness resulting from unemployment.

The saga of *Uganda's* sudden conversion into a hospital ship from an ordinary passenger liner began on April 10 when the ship was docked at Alexandria in Egypt. Rabindra Chander Kar was among the contingent of Indian crew that manned the *Uganda* at the time. Recounted Kar: "We were getting ready to sail for Cyprus with a lot of English students on board when we were told that the ship had been requisitioned by the British Government. The same night the ship sailed for Naples where the passengers were off-loaded and we headed for Gibraltar. Meanwhile word had been passed around by the captain that the ship was meant for a war zone and the cr... asked to volunteer for service."

Refusal: Kar had carried a co... Captain Biddick's notice to the ship's ... pany which said the *Uganda* would ser... hospital ship and added that "in th... nature of the case, active service can... excluded but will be declared, if at all, ... it appears to both the commandi... officer and secretary of state that it ... solutely necessary". The notice, serv... April 11, called crew members for a m... the same afternoon in the ship's res... where Captain Biddick promised to ... all questions. The crew was also a... treat the entire matter as strictly confi... and not to discuss it with passengers ... were still aboard as the vessel had r... reached Naples.

The meeting in the ship's rest...



BIKASH DAS

Unemployed seamen at the union o...

turned out to be difficult for Captain ... as almost the entire complement of ... crew refused to go to the Falkland ... they were asked to do so by the ... Government. As the captain could ... ing about this he had to allow them ... the ship, but told them in no uncertain ... that they would not find jobs wi... Peninsular and Orient vessel (the one ... the *Uganda*) in future. Strangely enough ... said Kar, a similar warning was not ... a lot of British sailors who also quit the ... at Gibraltar, though it should have been ... moral obligation to stay on and if need ... fight for 'Queen and country'. ... Gibraltar the Indians were flown ... Calcutta via London at the com... expense.

As the Indians came down the ...

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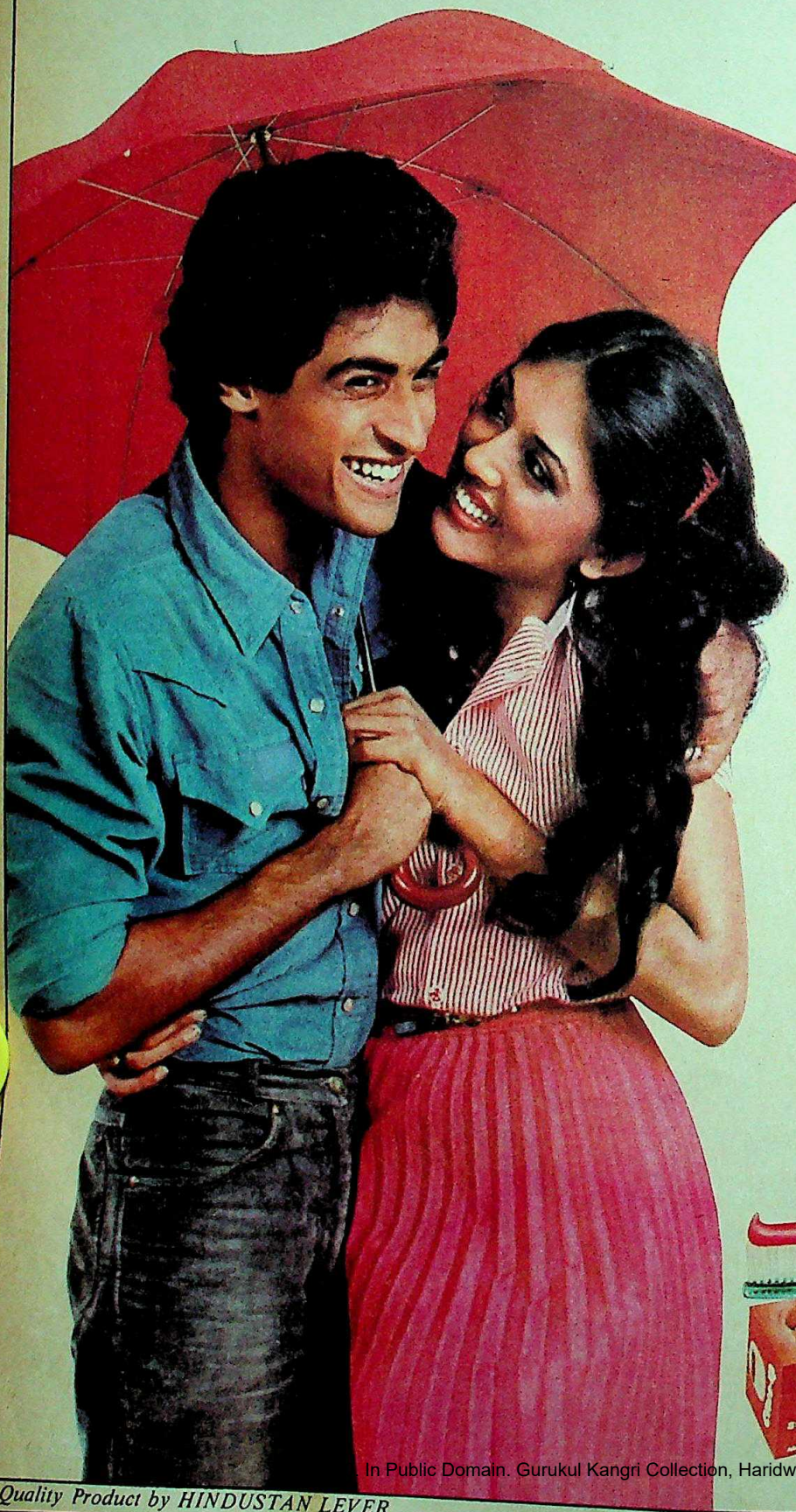
Togetherness is sharing fun and laughter



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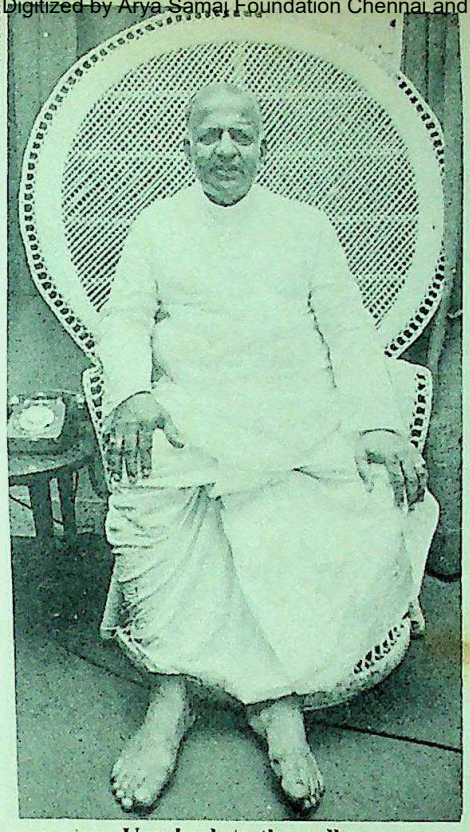
ar, they saw the upper deck being
o a helipad and when the last of
left the ship, an estimated 2,000
diers clambered aboard. However,
crew members were required and
ssages were flashed out to the
's agents in Calcutta, Mackinnon
enzie, who succeeded in recruiting
hundred Indian seamen.
frantic bid to stop Britain from
Indians for its own war, the
dominated Forward Seamen's un-
ables to various ministers in Delhi
ved no reply. Said Union leader
Banerjee: "We even tried to get the
orities here to intervene but there
sponse."
ally Indian seamen aboard the
ill be earning only £50 (Rs 900) a
ainst their British counterparts'
5,184) a month. Whatever the
d benefits of their venture aboard
a, the seamen have certainly made
the popular slogan 'Join the navy
e world' which will definitely read
h the update: '...and fight so-
se's war'. —SUMANTA SEN

AKA

sperate
ves

DEVRAJ URS, the former chief minister of Karnataka, has made many desperate moves in his unceasing quest for power. But his recent decision to quit the Congress(S) and form a regional d the Karnataka Kranti Ranga, is his most desperate move yet.

April 29, Urs sent a terse telegram to (S) President Sharad Pawar that meeting with 'legislators and functionaries' of the state unit of ataka Pradesh Congress(S), it had ided to 'sever' links with the party. He later claimed at a press e that they had come to this because the Congress(S) had 'lost gs and direction'. He said that he followers could not reconcile es to the contradictory electoral which the party was striking up at al level. How, he asked, could the e an alliance with the Congress(I) Bengal while aligning with the ist Party of India (Marxist) in He claimed that the last straw had e Chandigarh unity convention, his opinion, shattered all hopes of the opposition parties coming together.



PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

Urs: back to the wall

Rude Shock: Urs claimed that he had the whole-hearted support of his state unit for his move. If he really believed this, he received a rude shock two days later when his two closest aides Azeez Sait and K.H. Srinivas, the vice-president and general secretary respectively of the Congress(S), deserted him to join the Congress(I). Sait accused Urs of losing his own sense of direction and added cuttingly: "Congress might be a hell but I would prefer to be in it rather than go to any heaven of Devraj Urs."

Srinivas took the Shimoga unit of the party into the Congress(I) with him. In Sait's stronghold Mysore, however, the district unit decided to remain with the Congress(S) under the new *ad hoc* president Tulsi Dasappa. Another Congress(S) MLA C. Rudrappa decided on May 6 to sit as an independent in the Assembly.

With these desertions Chief Minister R. Gundu Rao's taunt that Urs is only a "paper leader" seems to have come true. Urs' party strength in the 225-member Assembly has come down from 10 to seven. With this the fragile United Democratic Front (UDF), which the Communist Party of India, the Janata and the Congress(S) had put forward so as to be a recognised opposition party in the Assembly, has cracked up. As the minimum number of members required is 24 to be recognised as an opposition party, the UDF which had 26 MLA's has now only 23 and Rao will be sitting pretty when the monsoon session begins next month. The Congress(I) strength is now an unprecedented 187.

But Urs is not perturbed by his ignominious status in Karnataka and although he has formed a regional party he is still after bigger game. He made his intentions clear by not fielding any candidates for the two Assembly by-elections in Karnataka to be held on May 19. His ostensible reason: why split the votes further by dividing the Opposition? In reality, Urs did not want to risk having his candidates lose their deposits—a likely outcome—and confirm to his peers like Charan Singh and H.N. Bahuguna that he is, indeed, a paper tiger.

Instead Urs went to Haryana and Himachal Pradesh to campaign for the Lok Dal. He even agreed to campaign for the Left Democratic Front in Kerala. Urs held a meeting of his regional party on May 10 to chalk out its policies. It's clear that Urs is biding his time till the results of the Assembly elections in the four states before making any moves. What Urs is looking for is a new national party which would consist of the Lok Dal, Bahuguna's Democratic Socialist Party and his own regional party. But this is a pipe-dream that could easily go up in a puff of smoke. —RAJ CHENGAPPA

ANDHRA PRADESH

Literary Storm

GOVERNMENTS seldom come out well in literary disputes. This was proved once again when the Andhra Pradesh Government virtually banned the Telugu novel *Mareechika* (Mirage) by issuing an order listing certain paragraphs of the book as objectionable.

The order issued on April 1 went practically unnoticed until *The Hindu* reported it verbatim on April 28. When it came to public notice it caused considerable surprise. After all the book had been on the stands since January 1979. And even before that, it had been serialised in 1978 in the Telugu weekly *Andhra Bhoomi*. Its author Vasireddy Seetha Devi, 43, has won a Sahitya Akademi award for her book *Samatha*. She has written 24 books altogether. And though the Government describes her as Mrs Vasireddy Seetha Reddy, she is unmarried.

The effect of the ban has been predictable. Ever since the controversy, sales of the book have spurted. Now there is hardly anybody in the state who does not know the story of *Mareechika* which deals with the plight of modern youth. The two main

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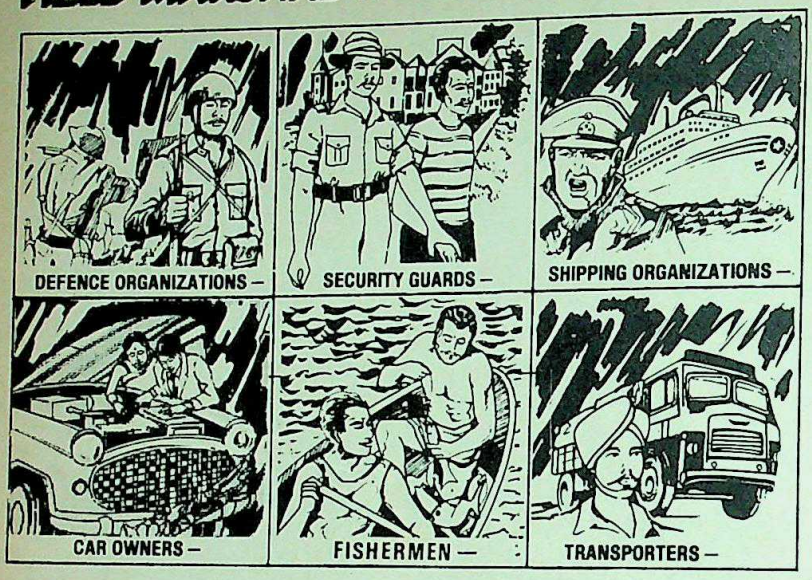
FIELD MARSHAL in various fields..



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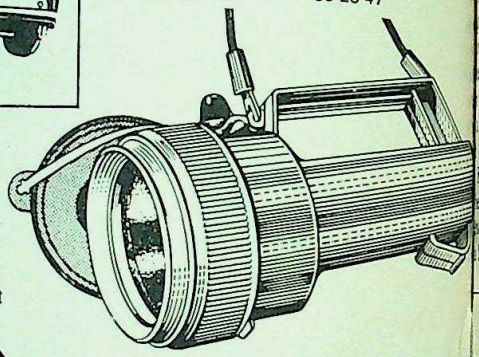

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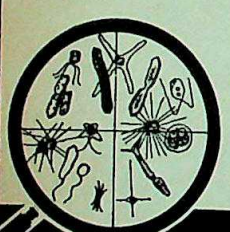
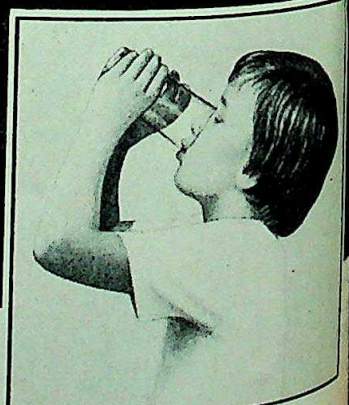


Your family's health depends a lot on whether you change them every 6 months or not



Its the filter candles that matter

PRESSMAN

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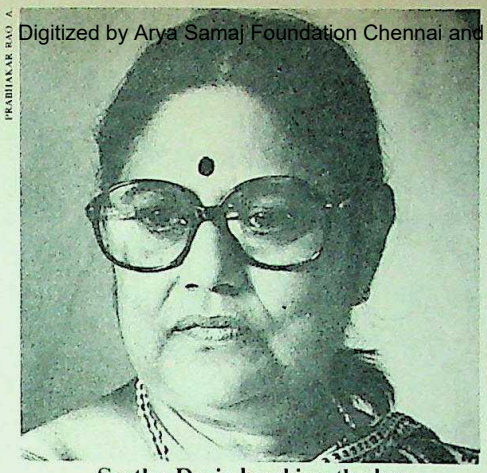
s of the book represent two ends of rum—at one end is Shabari, a g addict, and at the other is Jyothi,

e Claims: The police charge that ends to excite disaffection towards rnment and its armed forces and class hatred and conflict besides y young minds of impressionable dangerous, violent philosophy of ". The police have apparently d to this view after a great deal of in a confidential report dated June the deputy inspector-general of ested that the novel be banned as passages violated the law. Retorts manna, a prominent poet and "How can a novel written four sow seeds of disaffection now, if it do so all these days?"

manna is not the only one to the police order. The ban has storm in literary circles in Andhra Says lawyer and civil rights cam- K.G. Kannabiran: "Such things cause we allow a bunch of idiots to olutionary poet Sri Sri (Srirangam Rao) exclaims even more devastat-



PRABHAKAR RAO A.

Seetha Devi: bombing the ban

ingly: "Now it is common for police all over the country to rape women. In Andhra they are a shade better, being able to read through a few leaves of books to ban novels." Another writer K. Ramlakshmi says: "The atrocious English translation of some paragraphs presented to the home secretary seemed objectionable and he promptly signed the order."

Unimplemented: But while the Government has succeeded in kicking up a rumpus it does not seem exceptionally keen on implementing its order. The only step it has taken so far is to have the book withdrawn from government libraries. The publishers have not yet been asked to surrender copies of the book. Says the author Seetha Devi: "I have not been informed about the order yet."

In fact, there are doubts about the real reason for the ban. Seetha Devi is a government servant in the Directorate of Youth Services. It is said that the press secretary to the chief minister, C.V. Narasimha Reddy, who belongs to the Youth Service Department, worked backstage to settle scores. Denying the charge Reddy says: "I do not indulge in backbiting or any such activity but there has been fighting between Seetha Devi and her juniors."

The loud public outcry has caused considerable embarrassment to the Government. Says Home Minister C. Jagannatha Rao: "I will read the book myself to determine whether or not the order should be revoked." Other officials, however, are treating the issue as a prestige matter. But even they are prepared to admit that because of their ill-advised act *Mareechika* will be the best seller of the year.

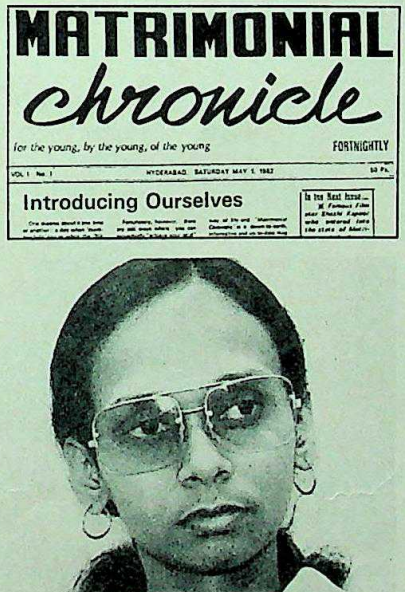
—AMARNATH K. MENON

RRIAGE

e Matchmaker

WITH matrimonials having become big business in the country, the birth of a newspaper devexclusively to matchmaking was only estion of time. But even so, when 's first matrimonial paper, an eight- tabloid, surfaced last fortnight on erabad newsstands, the publishers chosen an appropriate inaugural May 1, better known as May Day. that *Matrimonial Chronicle,* as the er is called, contained much by way of Day signals. Only four out of the pages were devoted to matrimonial and though brisk, its sales were more esult of curiosity rather than genuine e-seekers.

But initial reactions are probably ptive since, as a formula, *Matri- al Chronicle* seems destined to suc- For one, at 50 paise a copy, the ghtly offers good value for money rospective in-laws and at 30 paise a d, even paid advertisements work out per than inserts in national dailies. s owner-editor J. Afshan, 26, who a master's degree in commerce from ania University, asserts: "My aim is a slot that is totally neglected. The is from the *Employment News* which


MATRIMONIAL
chronicle
for the young, by the young, of the young
FORTNIGHTLY
HYDERABAD SATURDAY MAY 1 1982
Introducing Ourselves

Afshan and the "Chronicle": filling a neglected slot

is intended for a specially targeted audience. Match-seekers are an exclusive clientele who find it easier to have it all in one package instead of browsing through several newspapers."

For added convenience, the advertisements are grouped together under religious headings. But *Matrimonial Chronicle's* biggest draw is certain to be its page on "Matches from Abroad" which mainly carries desperate pleas from south Indian Muslims working in the Middle East. The fact that many of the advertisers make it clear that they are looking for a second wife is hardly likely to act as a deterrent since the salary figures prominently mentioned offer considerable security, even as wife number two.

Afshan, who is single herself, has other innovations up her sleeve. The next issue promises readers that "famous film star Shashi Kapoor who entered into the state of matrimony at the dreamy age of 20 and is living blissfully thereafter frankly and authoritatively (having made a hit of it) expresses his views on matrimony".

Other ideas include photographs of "just wedded" couples, views on how to cement a happy marriage from sociologists and psychiatrists and, for those who don't match up, lawyers will detail case histories on divorces and related legal tangles. Inevitably, a column on advice to those having marital problems will also be introduced while a consultant will offer free advice on how not to break up a happy home. *Matrimonial Chronicle* may not set Dal Lake on fire but down south it looks like being a winner.

—AMARNATH K. MENON

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MADHYA PRADESH

Sin Memoriam

UJJAIN, in west Madhya Pradesh, has the habit of bouncing into the news in a most startling manner. The credit for this goes to a small community which is, by and large, shunned by the city's roughly three lakh population. Ujjain's red-light area is indeed unusual. Fifteen months ago it was a prostitute-turned-temple-priestess who made news; this time it is a school named after Sanjay Gandhi which is irritating at least one bigwig in New Delhi. Arun Nehru, powerful parliamentarian, trustee of the Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Trust and much else besides, has demanded that the school's name be changed.

In the forefront of the school's formation and management are Bawla Shrivastava, a tough, middle aged man who came to do business in Ujjain two decades ago, but ended up in the red-light area instead, and Shakuntalabai a slim, dark woman in her forties, who says she has been in the area "since the beginning". Shakuntalabai is president of the Vaishya Kalyan Sangh (prostitutes' welfare association). Shakuntalabai says that this is the first society of its kind to be formally registered. She points proudly to the framed certificate that hangs on the wall of the tiny room that serves as the association office.

Reformation: Nehru's message was a sequel to a letter by Shakuntalabai to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in December last year. Shakuntalabai had written that more than half a dozen prostitutes were willing to give up their trade and also mentioned that by way of reformation, a school named after her son had also been started. The expected pat on the back for their good intention did not, however, materialise. Says Shrivastava glumly: "We were not expecting this kind of a letter and that too from him." "Him" meant Nehru whom Shrivastava repeatedly referred to as Arun Gandhi.

Nehru's letter addressed to Shakuntalabai states that "while we fully appreciate the sentiments which you have expressed we would not be in a position to allow you to use the name of Shri Sanjay Gandhi for this institution. As a policy decision of the board of trustees it has been decided that the name of Sanjay Gandhi should not be associated with any institution or school where funds are collected from the public or financial assistance is sought from the state Government."

While the trustees may indeed have taken a "policy decision" how serious they have been about it so far is open to question since the number of institutions bearing Sanjay's name continues to grow. If Nehru has acted promptly in this case, it is probably because, like any normal person, he is embarrassed by this association bearing Sanjay's name. After all, while the reformation of prostitutes is all very well, it is much more convenient for every one if it is done quietly and without involving the names of prominent leaders.

Shrivastava and Shakuntalabai: discrimination?

Token Fee: In any case, says Shrivastava, no money has been taken from either the public or from the state Government. The school is run by the Sanjay Gandhi Memorial School Association, which is also a registered society. Shakuntalabai says that its members are 85 prostitutes, of whom pays Rs 10 per month [illegible] primary school's maintenance. The [illegible] who number about 80 pay a token one rupee per month. This accord Shrivastava is just enough to meet ex which include the salaries of three te The school, which operates for three in the afternoon, was established on ren's Day last year.

At the root of the idea is the last year when Munni Bai, a local pr turned priestess of a small temple in light area. Outraged residents of an ing locality first demanded her rem and succeeded—and later asked prostitutes be shunted from th which is in the heart of th Afraid of being turned ou their homes, they formed Vaishya Kalyan Sangh to m threat. Says Shakuntalabai: we had formed the associati thought that we might as w a school. Every woman ha children and where else ca hope to study?" But she is vague about why they sett Sanjay's name and says unc ly: "We had to decide on name, so why not his? And case we sympathise strongl the Congress Party."

Decrepit Condition: primary school is housed building which, like others locality, is in run-down con The board that declared it Sanjay Gandhi Smriti Vi (Sanjay Gandhi Memorial S is no longer in its place. stolen and burnt on the fes Holi. The premises consis verandah and a single roo which a monthly rent of Rs paid. With the summer h on, the place is quiet. The r gloomy but clean and boards on the wall bear elegi words in chalk. Ironically, a garlanded photograph Gandhi with the legend pilot" (the nation's pilot). But there photograph of Sanjay at all. Which goes to show that Shakuntalabai and vastava understand their politics.

Shrivastava says that they don't any trouble and are willing to change school's name if it offends. Shrivastava ders over a new name and muses that they could delete the "Sanjay" and call Gandhi Memorial School. This seems bet since one Gandhi or another destined to be at the helm of the affairs.

—SREEKANT KHANDEKAR

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olonging The Agony

NEVER before had any legislation regarding Assam, the state that has been the most persistent thorn in the flesh of the Centre, enjoyed such a peaceful reception. On April 30, in just half an nion Minister of State for Home Nihar Ranjan Lasker, sought and Lok Sabha's approval to the Assam egislature (Delegation of Powers) . The bill, which was introduced on ay of the Budget session with only ers present and was feebly opposed members of the Opposition, gave powers to the executive in the name resident.

was the first time that Assam has der President's rule directly. In the state Assembly had been kept in ed animation but now, with the of an election being bleak, the Government has resorted to this step. The bill provides for the transegislative powers to the President, ment of a 45-member Consultative ee comprising MPs and absolute to the executive to legislate on any thout the prior approval of Parliaaid Lasker: "There is nothing exary in the bill. It has been the normal to undertake such legislation in to a state under President's rule."

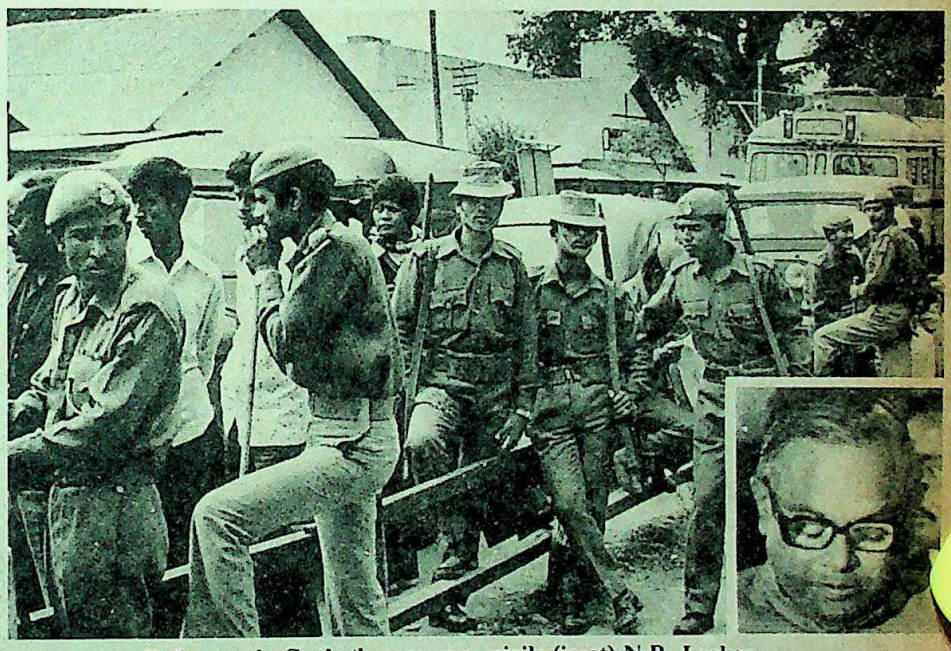
nusual: What was unusual was one of ses in the bill. In clause 3 section 2 of it is written: "The President may, e to time, whether Parliament is or ession, enact, as a President's Act, a taining such provisions as he conecessary. Provided that before enact- Act, the President shall, whenever ders it practicable to do so, consult a ee constituted for the purpose." position members found in this an to scuttle democratic traditions. ommunist Party of India (CPI) memrjit Gupta: "Why is this qualifying put about whenever he considers it ble to do so? That means, there may ces when even consultation with the ee may be bypassed. Parliament is ut out of the picture, more or less. is a 45-member committee, it may be nvenient to avoid it from time to

ere is also concern about the possible of power in a state which will pro- e governed directly by the Centre for the next nine months. And with no ght to an agitation that has lasted 28 months, taken a toll of 290 lives and resulted in losses of about Rs 2,000 crore, elections seem to be a distant prospect. Speculated a senior Home Ministry official: "We have not been able to hold elections to the Lok Sabha vacancies in 26 months. I don't think a favourable climate will be created for holding elections." Lasker, however, declared: "We will be able to hold elections in eight to 10 months because we have initiated steps to meet the genuine demands of the people."

Measures: While the complex question of defining and deporting foreigners remains unsolved, the Centre has taken certain measures to contain dissatisfaction. Various laws have been enacted which prevent foreigners from acquiring immovable property, require identity cards of voters in the entire northeast and greater vigilance on the Indo-Bangla border. The check-posts have been increased from 52 to 79 and over 8,000 foreigners have been deported in the last two years.

These measures have not satisfied the two main agitating groups, the All Assam Students Union (AASU) and the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP), who last fortnight renewed their threat of civil disobedience. This is not to say that they have been silent recently: in the last six months they have orchestrated 48 protests, including celebrating Bihu day, April 14, as Martyrs' Day. Besides this, they have been able to force a boycott of the courts by lawyers, to cause a black-out in Dibrugarh and organised relay hunger strikes by women. Said an AASU spokesman: "We are frustrated with the Government's indifferent attitude. They just want to drag out the whole issue so that the agitation dies a natural death. But we will fight to the finish."

The Centre for its part has not been idle. Mrs Gandhi's emissaries have held 17 rounds of talk, all unfruitful, with both sides not budging from their positions. All the prime minister's most trusted aides, from Yashpal Kapoor to Industry Minister, Narayan Dutt Tiwari, have been sent but the united front presented by the agitators has withstood all pressure. Even the liberal use of the Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA) and the National Security Act (NSA) have failed to create an impact on the agitating student leaders.



Policemen in Gauhati: necessary vigil; (inset) N.R. Lasker

The Government's major problem at the moment seems to be its inability to locate the financial sources of the agitators. The Union Home Ministry has received reports that the agitation leaders have forcibly collected over Rs 5 lakh from transport companies and petrol pump operators in the state. There are also reports of some businessmen funding AASU with liberal donations. Remarked a senior intelligence official: "No agitation has survived in India over six months. But the Assam student leaders are not only fighting but they also live in style." In the next 10 months of President's rule, the Centre expects to tackle the problems. But given the fact that similar impositions failed miserably in West Bengal and Kerala, the Centre is probably in for a major disappointment.

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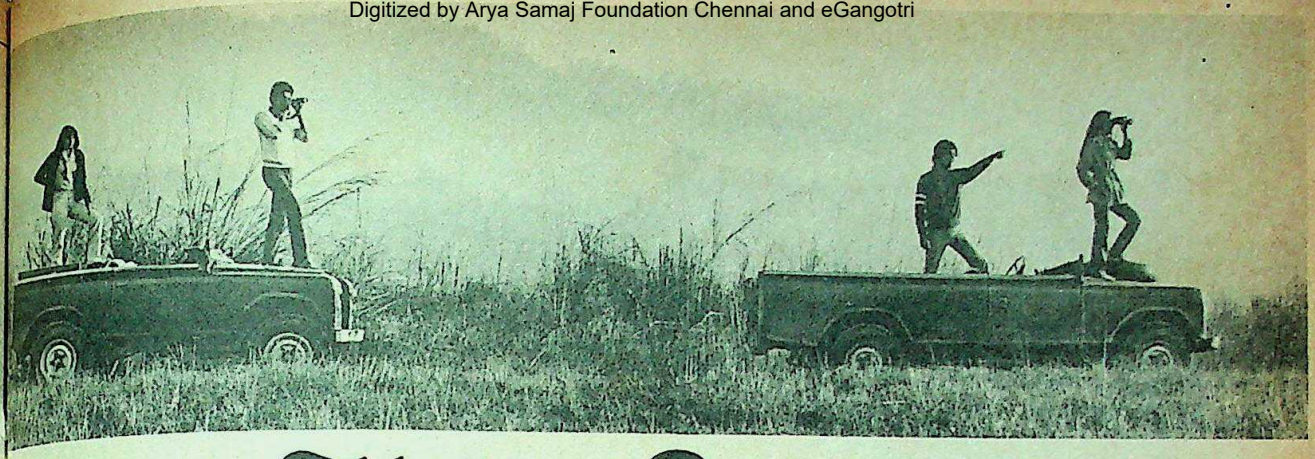

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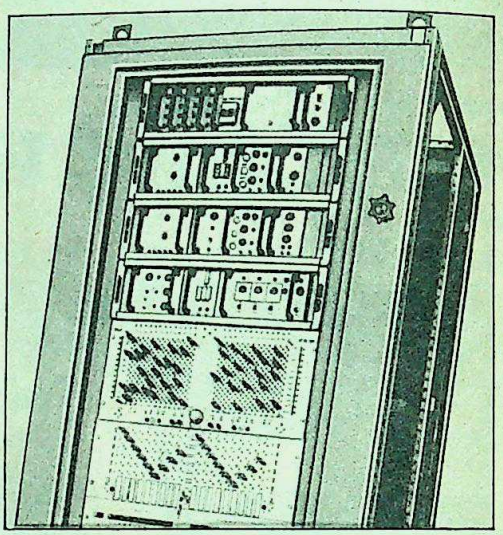

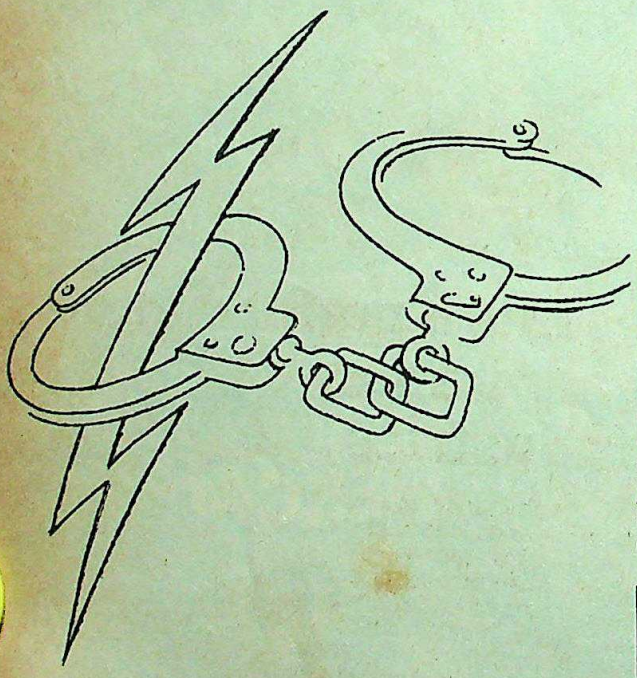

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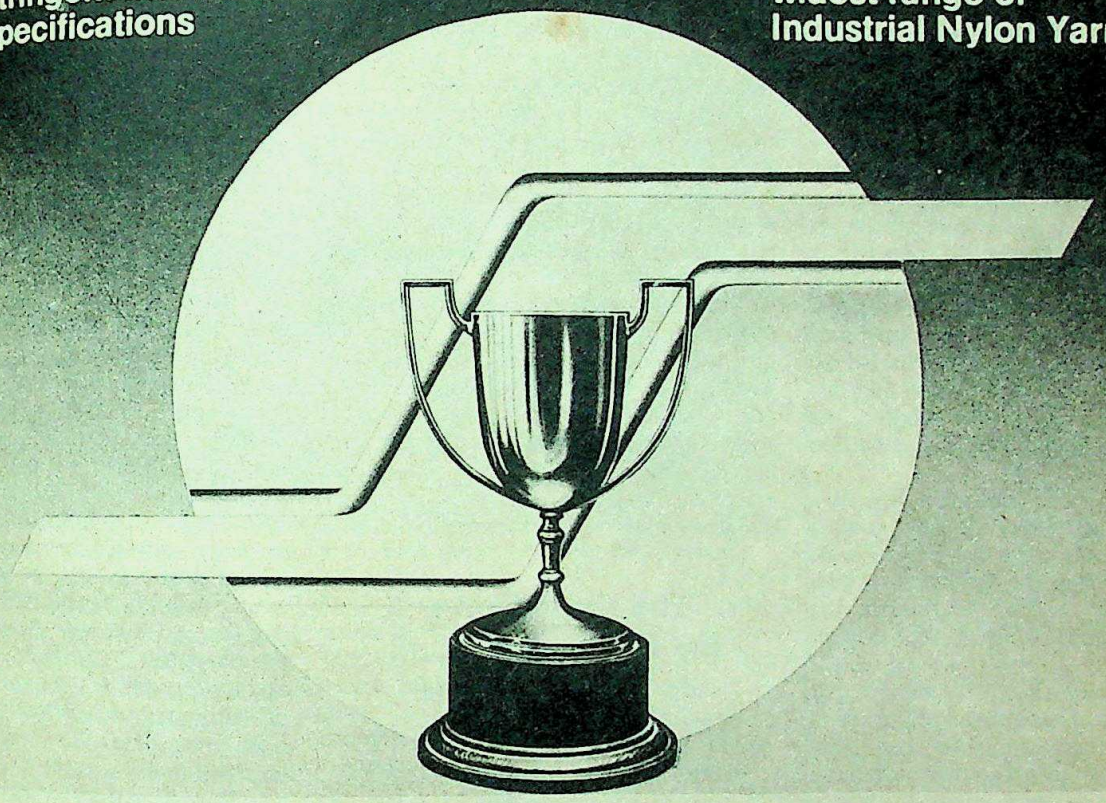

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Britain's Last Stand

THE RAUCOUS battle-cries of the British, urged on to patriotic fervour by the press and the politicians, have made an increasingly displeasing sound. They are in fact the last, or almost the last—since there is Northern Ireland to come—yelps of a doomed colonial empire, which has been a long time dying. Indeed under the aegis of our shopkeeper prime minister—who has been dividing her time between her hairdresser and her war cabinet—we seem to have chosen to go out with a bang, rather than a whimper.

But the struggle over the Falklands (Malvinas), for all the British talk of another 'D' Day, is a parody of the heroic; an absurd but violent folly; a battle in which the British can only be the long-term losers, and one which exactly expresses in its blindness the darkened political and economic condition of our nation.

The Argentinian junta, it is true, is a fascist and militarist regime with nothing whatever to recommend it. But it is this same fascist junta which the British had been helping to arm in these last years, and which—in a supreme irony—turned its guns on them. Indeed, it is only recently, as the dispute over the Falklands deepened, that the word 'fascist' began to escape the lips of Conservative ministers when describing Argentina. After all, they had not been known hitherto for any genuine hostility to extreme right-wing regimes, from South Africa to Chile; most of which they have, in different ways, been arming or supplying, openly or in secret, for decades.

Political Twins: Earlier, they had no political qualms in equipping Argentina with the instruments it needed to oppress its own people. (Such is the morality of political reaction, Chinese left or American right, the world over.) And though no one would want to argue that Mrs Thatcher and President Galtieri are political twins, nevertheless both are intransigent right-wing politicians, both at risk of political defeat—at the polls in the first case, and by coup in the second,—both adherents of the crudest economic doctrines, and both deeply hostile to the progressive and left movements in their own countries.

So, the problem is not, and never had been, the nature of the Argentinian regime, with its thousands of 'disappearances' of political detenus, and its systematic use of torture. Moreover, there are obviously fascists and fascists: a friendly fascist is a friend, but an unfriendly fascist is a fascist. It is not a question of scruples or ethics.

As for the Falkland Islands themselves, the British have as much right—and no more—to them as the Portuguese had to Goa. These rights are the rights of colonial conquest, and arose from an original expulsion of Argentinians nearly 150 years ago. They are rights which force and the gun originally gave, and which colonial and international law once automatically consecrated; a legitimacy which is now being generally challenged by the world's changing balance of forces. The human and civil rights of the Falklanders are one thing: but the rights to the Falkland Islands themselves are plainly quite another.

Illogical: Moreover, the territorial logic of British possession of the Falklands is not superior to that which would apply if the Argentinians possessed the Shetlands, off the north coast of Scotland: which is to say no logic at all. But once the Argentinian regime had reoccupied islands off its own coast, British colonial reassertiveness has sought to justify itself to the British people in a feasible (but pointless) attempt to reconquer them.

The struggle over the Falklands, for all the talk of another 'D' Day, is a parody of the heroic; an absurd but violent folly; a battle in which the British can only be the long-term losers.

Indeed, the most astonishing aspect of the whole tragi-comic operetta—playing at soldiers, but armed with live ammunition—is the way the British have reacted. The public, almost to a man, has sent off its 'boys' to war as if to the World Cup football finals (in which they also might meet Argentina on the field of battle). The Commander of the British task force was hoping for a 'walk-over in the big match', and others for a good clean game, no fouls, an impartial referee and a rousing finish. Indeed, if the Argentinians were to hit back beyond a tolerable limit, it would be regarded in Britain as definitely not cricket.

This display of fervour, for a farce, expresses an unconscious desire to escape doldrums of economic decline, for spectacular escapade: a three-mo television serial, in which the British are cowboys, and the Argentinians are the Indians.

The despatch of the British arm from Portsmouth—with flags flying, ba playing, British blimps beating their ch and headlines baying for the blood Argentina—was a grotesque and fee revival of an old piratical tradition precisely such a way, and with exactly feelings, generations of buccaneers pirates, colonial chieftains and age Empire, have set sail for foreign shores dreams of conquest. A tired nation, wra by economic crisis and political failure setting out to regain its spurs, as if Hen were once again testing his mettle Agincourt.

Spring Holiday: An even better par might be the Charge of the Light Brig the Crimean War, when a suicidal im drove a British army into the teeth o enemy with a similar despairing motive. point is that our lives have been dispiriting for too long. So that strappin a gun-holster has at last given relief constant belt-tightening to meet incre austerity, and a falling standard of li The spectator, sitting in front of his screen with his unpaid bills mounting, had an unexpected spring holiday: imaginary sea-trip to the South Atlantic boy-scout explorer and the col adventurer in each Briton have taken from the depressed taxpayer and harassed housewife.

Raising national morale is the po prize; but national morality and realis the victims. For it has permitted the B to re-enter for a moment that lost wo fantastic illusion which had seemed fo closed to them: of being masters of the g and its born rulers. But in the present whoever wins the battle, it is only the fo who can lose the war.

Indeed it is clear that a shre political intelligence than Mrs Thatch weighing carefully Britain's long economic interests in South America, have dictated less belligerence and cunning.

Because there is much else at stake merely the well-being of less than Falkland Islanders who 'wish to re British'; or than the 'liberation' of a h of rocky islands in the remote S Atlantic. Moreover, that the Argenti and the British should have fallen out the interests of both (to say nothing o Americans') coincide in the containme revolutionary pressures in the re superficially suggests a strange neg

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garet Thatcher seeing off troops bound for the Falklands: a tragi-comic operetta

common political objectives.

t the point is that the issues adow the combatants themselves: all, the oil and mineral reserves in the Atlantic and Antarctica, and the policing of an area strategically ant to the defence of South Africa, to the supervision of political ments in South America. No wonder e Americans are so deeply concerned hole affair. For it is they who have atest economic and military interest n the outcome.

d Result: Indeed, it is reasonably safe dict that the *ultimate* result of all owever long and stealthy the —is that the Falkland Islanders will ally be evacuated, and that the nd Islands will become a military and base, either directly under the on of the Americans or their clients. such a strategic distance from the is obvious that the British are much table agents (even if more stable) than South American regime, managed by could be. So that the overall logic of is happening, from all these oints, is the withdrawal of the British. the meantime, it is British and ician domestic politics which have the wild decision-making of both ments. As personally unpopular for ure of her economic policies, and their huge toll in unemployment, as the Argentinian junta is—or was—in its own country, Mrs Thatcher had been battling for her political life and her party's fortunes, in the changing alignment of British politics. It is this, as much as the interests of the Falkland Islanders, which determined her actions.

But most important of all, the ferocity of the British response to the Argentinian takeover is, I think, a forerunner of many bigger North-South battles to come. In the Falkland Islands, the 'First' World, now renamed the 'North', represented by Britain, is taking on a hitherto subordinate nation, which—fascist or not—stands for all those developing and backward countries (the 'South') which have dared in the last two decades to thumb their noses at the once unchallenged supremacy of the developed.

So to the British, defending the dregs of their colonial empire to the last ditch—which, as I have indicated, is not the Falklands but Northern Ireland—the Argentinians have become the 'Argies', as once the blacks were (and still are) 'wogs' and 'darkies'.

It has been a dismal performance. The fall of both the Thatcher and Galtieri governments would be the best outcome of it, and the only consolation for the waste of the lives, whether few or many, and the resources of both peoples.

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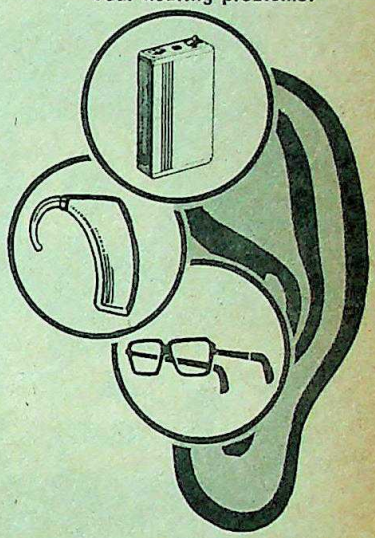

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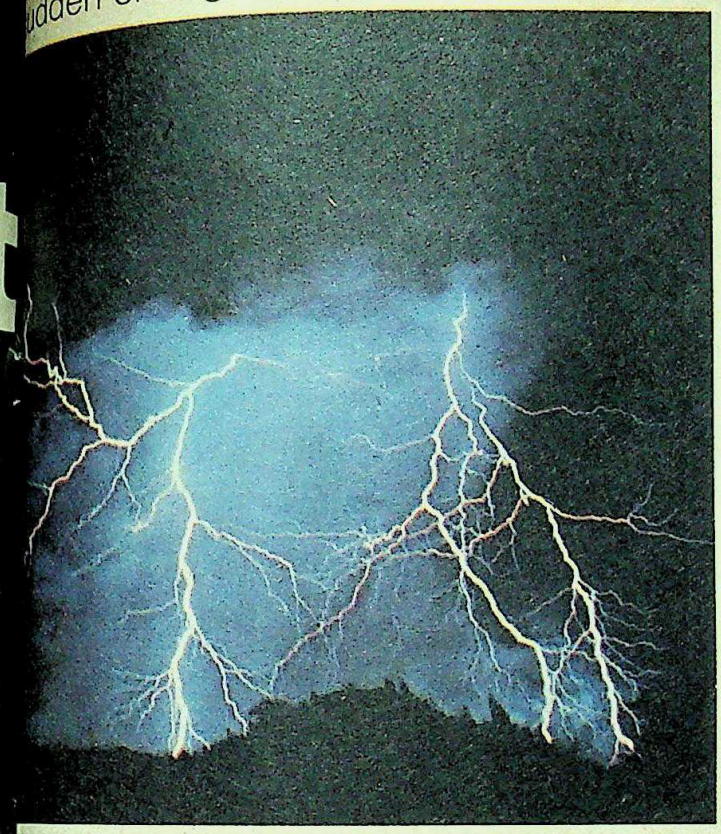

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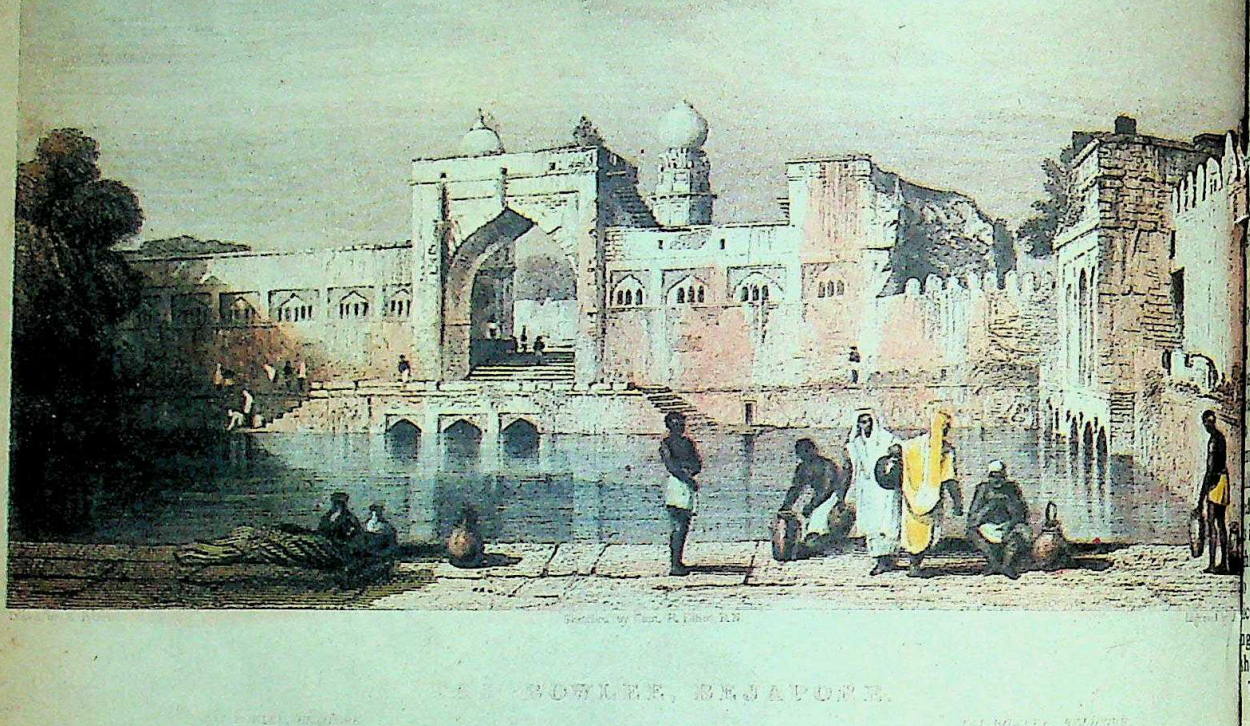

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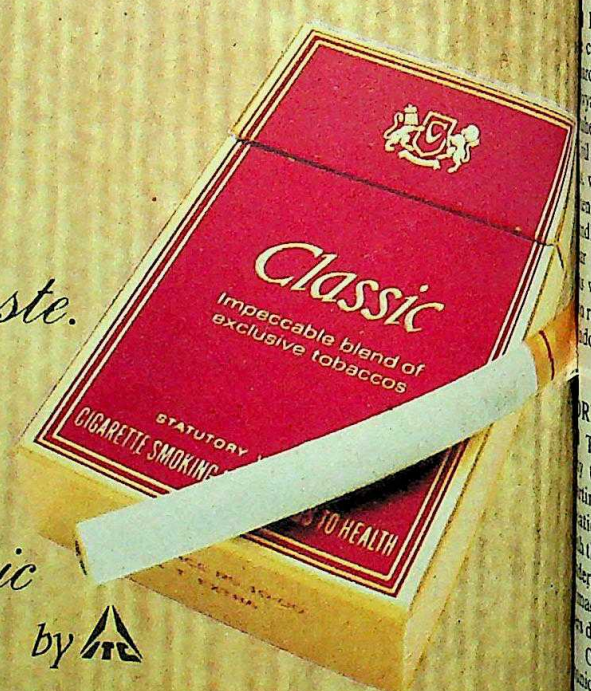

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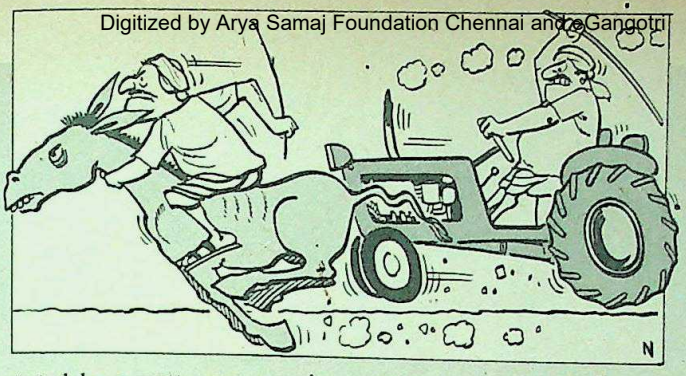
LE VS MACHINE

On the face of it, there is much to choose between mule and a tractor—both stolid draught animals, can work for hours without tiring, and both have the minimum of intelligence. But in Moga, Punjab's biggest cattle mandi, the mule proved that even in this age, flesh is superior to iron.

A burly Sikh farmer was driving his 35 hp tractor to the market one day and got irritated by a potter on a mule who was frisking in the neighbourhood. The farmer taunted the potter about his seemingly frail mount, and the potter promptly challenged the farmer to a tractor-mule race. So sure was the farmer of victory that he offered the potter Rs 5,000 if he lost.



The race was held over a 1,000-metre track. And lo and behold, although the farmer pushed his tractor's engine to tortured excesses the mule galloped on steadily ahead and crossed the finishing line first. The tractor roared in a half-minute later, carrying a Sikh on the verge of tears. He was as good as his word, however, and handed over Rs 5,000 to the winner. As for the mule, he was swamped with garlands and taken around town in a big procession.

CTURNAL RIDDLE

Taxi-drivers in Calcutta, ked to drive in the area nd the racecourse and the at one in the morning, ur. They demur, because l police officer has devel- a liking for their cars and in and out of them at the test provocation. They demur because the tall e officer appears to be a g from the twilight zone: hort, a ghost.

The latest 'tale to be told at night' began when a taxi-driver, blubbering strange words, erupted into the police station and said that an officer had stopped him near the zoo, got into the car and whispered: "Have no fear." As the taxi slowed down near the racecourse turning, the driver heard the rear door open and, turning around, found no one on the back seat, outside on the road, or indeed anywhere.

In the days to come, other blubbering taxi-drivers told the same story, which moved even the hearts of the cynical policemen. In fact, they linked the vanishing fare to Subhansu Gupta, a police inspector who had died in a road accident at that very spot at that very time of night. The police, however, cannot explain why Gupta should delight in frightening taxi-drivers out of their skins, unless he is searching for the one who shortchanged him when he was alive.

LISHED OFF

It is not often that hum- clerks discover glittering ds at their feet, so that yanathan, one such pen- er in the Tamil Nadu l Supplies office in Mad- was pleasantly surprised n he saw a carelessly tied dle lying one morning r the bus-stop where he s waiting. Further inspec- revealed what looked like ddin's cave—heaps of gold ornaments piled in enticing profusion. Divyanathan was just about to stride away when he heard a cough.

The cough belonged to one of two men who were eyeing the treasure and Divyanathan with apologetic intensity. They waggled fingers in his face, talked about fair shares, and proposed that the three share the booty. Divyanathan coyly shook his head, but offered them his gold chain, ring and watch. They accepted this pitiful recompense, and went.

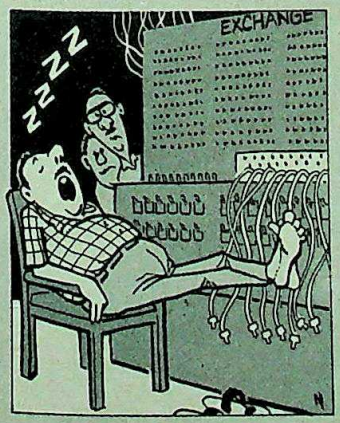
Divyanathan also went, straight to a goldsmith. Even as the clerk was licking his chops, the goldsmith pawed the loot disdainfully and then scraped off some of the gold with a smirk. And so Divyanathan went home with a pile of gilded junk, muttering rude things about pots of gold. Another believer bites the dust.

RTY WINKS

There are various reasons telephones don't work, ting with the Telecommu- ations Ministry and ending the rat that feasted on the derground wires. In Mandi, machal Pradesh, subscri- discovered a new reason.

One Friday night, com- nication between Mandi nearby Sundernagar was ruptly cut off. All that sub- bers could hear was a dead silence, with none of the squeaks, squawks and beeps usually associated with a connection. Officials feared that the overhead wires had been cut or stolen, and set out on a grand tour.

The extensive patrol, which had all the urgency of a boyscout outing, took all of three hours. All wires, copper or otherwise, were safe in their warm nests. When the exhausted officials entered the Sundernagar telephone exchange early in the morning, they discovered that the telephone operator was also safe in his nest, snoring his way through pleasant dreams. To ensure peace, he had disconnected all lines passing through his exchange. After a suitable reprimand, the connections were made again, and instruments woke up all over town, squeaking, squawking and beeping with joy.



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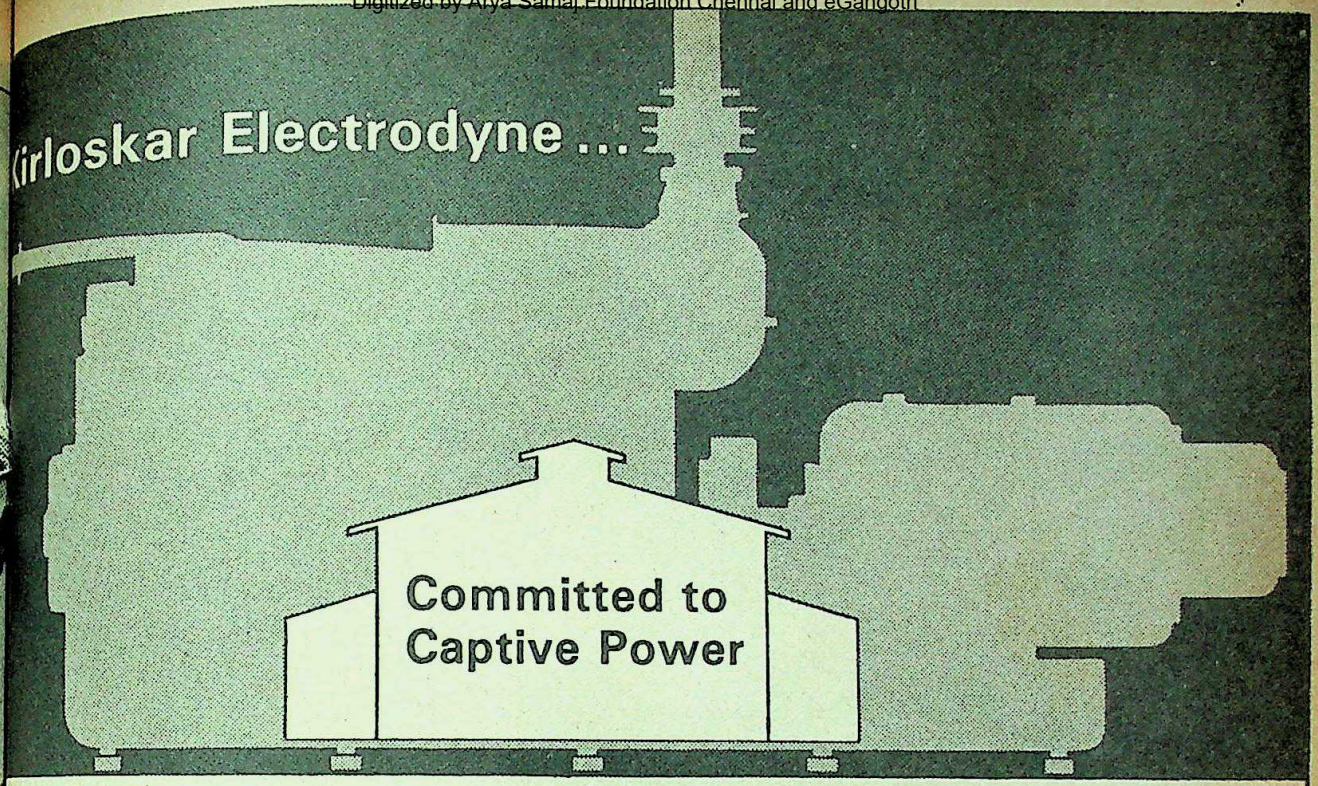

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BIRTH CONTROL

The Natural Way

TO THE 'cafeteria' system of family planning now prevalent in India, under which a variety of birth control methods are available over the counter, a new technique may soon be added if the findings of a survey done in Karnataka are accepted by the Union Health Ministry. A team of researchers from a voluntary organisation has tested 2,790 couples spread over Karnataka on the effectiveness of the ovulation method of fertility regulation—a technique which does not involve any external devices such as contraceptives—and has come up with a high success rate, even in rural areas.

The tests, which were a follow-up of a World Health Organisation (WHO) study done in 1978 in Bangalore involving the same method, were carried out over a two-year period spanning nine districts of Karnataka. A testing centre was established in each of these districts and the couples selected at random were first educated in the use of the ovulation method. Interestingly, 85.5 per cent of them had not used any method of family planning previously, for a variety of reasons, ranging from economic factors to fear and ignorance of birth control techniques.

Significantly, more than half of the couples tested used the ovulation method for limiting births and only a third used it for spacing their children. More importantly the continuation rate, a vital criteria for judging the effectiveness of a particular method, was found to be as high as 70.8 per cent at the end of two years. Only one couple reported a failure in the technique, giving it a very low failure rate of 0.2 per cent. Another 255 couples deliberately avoided the method so that they could have children.

Easily Understood: Almost half of the couples covered were illiterate, yet found it easy to understand the method. As the ovulation method is a natural family planning technique it was mostly propagated by Catholic Christians who reject the use of contraceptives on moral grounds. In the Karnataka study 59.6 per cent of the couples who adopted the method were Hindus and Muslims and only a third, Catholics; thus religion is not a barrier to its propagation.

In the ovulation method of natural family planning, discovered by Australian scientists John and Evelyn Billings, the woman has to discern a sensation of wetness in her genital area. The cervical mucus which causes the wetness at the vulva is an indication of her fertile period. The mucus appears because of a rise in the level of oestrogen, a hormone, in the blood and ovulation then takes place. Sexual contact

Dr Mascarenhas explains the meth

during the 'wet' period could result i
gnancy. For the study, women were a
record on a chart when they ha
menstruating or passing through a
phase. The sensation of wetness was
with a circle on the chart to symbo
ovum or egg and acted as a warn
women to keep off sex.

To educate women in rural are
familiar processes of cultivation were
an apt analogy. The researchers wo
pare the ovum with a seed which need
soil to germinate. The soil was likene
sperm being placed in a woman's bod
as when a seed is planted on dry soil it
also if there is no mucus the sperms
survive and fertilise the ovum. It was
that 97 per cent of the women were
distinguish the sensations of wetne
dryness—an important criteria for the
of the method. They admitted that th
noticed the sensations much before l
of the method but had not realised
significance.

In India sex is a topic usually spo
behind bedroom doors—or not at a
the women surveyed surprisingly ans
even the most searching questions.
26.8 per cent admitted that they f
sexual urge most in pre-and post-men
periods which corresponded to their i
periods. A small percentage said they
rienced the urge during fertile perio
Most of the husbands did not seem t
observing the ovulation method sch
but in 9.7 per cent of the cases
developed between the couple.

Major Role: The results o
Karnataka study are significant. Whil
ing an evaluation of fertility control m
in women the Indian Council of M
Research in its bulletin of Decembe
concluded: "We have to accept the fa
there is no ideal contraceptive, fre
side-effects and complications, suitab
use in all women." This being the ca
ovulation method may yet play a maj
in increasing the acceptance of family
ning by Indian couples.

Says Dr Marie Mascarenhas, w
ded the team of researchers: "The
and inexpensiveness of the ovulatio
thod, fitting in with the biophilic pat
(that is, love for family life) o
Indian people, are factors which
Government and voluntary agencies
ved in family planning should se
consider. The present 'cafeteria' s
should include this method as it can e
taught by barefoot teachers with m
training and (be made a part of) a
tegrated health approach."

—RAJ CHE

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e Bare
cts

NCERNED at growing threats to e ecology of the Eastern Ghats, vironmentalists have recently laun- mpaign to focus more scientific and ntal attention on the neglected s a first step a recent seminar at tnam called together ecologists to k of the resources, development and ent of the ghats.

seminar revealed how little is bout the area. Unlike the Western e Eastern Ghats are not a con- ange but a series of isolated hills from Orissa through Andhra nd down into Tamil Nadu. Data is ed among researchers in various of the natural sciences in the three cently the Andhra Pradesh Natural ociety published an 87-page pre- survey of the ghats made by its K.S.R. Raju. Says Raju, "The hats is still a unique storehouse of nts and animal species that do not where else in the world."

outcome of the seminar was a n to set up an Eastern Ghats ent Board, like the one which the Western Ghats. The board will ecological studies and act as an ental watch-dog scrutinising de- plans for the area. However at e board exists only on paper.

eed for such a body to protect the becoming increasingly urgent. egetation, ravaged by shifting cul- giving way to secondary shrub and growth in many places. Since pro- ests are not fully surveyed and ed, poachers have a field day. Iron te mining endangers even human in some pockets and dams are ecosystems over wide areas.

atened Sanctuary: Pulicat Lake by f Bengal in Andhra Pradesh, is multi-pronged ecological assault. ween the island of the Sriharikota tion and the mainland, the lagoon me part of the Rs 1.5 crore Savera lt and Chemical Complex being by the Andhra Pradesh Industrial on. The project involves taking 12 acres of watersheet—more than rea of the lagoon. Made available rnment order, the area was offered Rs 10 an acre per year. The lease, made on instructions of then

G. SHANKAR

Fishermen at Pulicat lake: threatened by development

revenue minister N. Janardhan Reddi, goes against an earlier order, made in 1976, declaring Pulicat a bird sanctuary.

Spread over 461 sq km in the southernmost Nellore district and extending for another 60 sq km into Chingleput district of Tamil Nadu, Pulicat is an ecological paradise. The lake is shallow in the northern part and deepens as it flows south after mixing with sea water. The area leased for the salt complex lies in the shallow northern portion on either side of the Sullurpet-Sriharikota road.

The lake, which abounds in fish and prawns, provides a livelihood for 3,000 families of fishermen. Birds flock to the brackish mud-flats and islets, foraging for microorganisms and fish. The lake attracts grey pelicans, sandpipers, storks, egrets, herons, flamingoes, brahmini ducks, pintails, shovellers, tufted ducks and teals.

The bunds being constructed for salt extraction will directly affect the fishing as well as the birds' feeding grounds. Fisheries Department reports state that the direct income the Government gains by leasing the land will be far less than the benefit derived by thousands of fishermen. According to officials of the Indian Space Research Organisation, opening up the area to salt manufacturers will also endanger the security of the space station.

Mining Inroads: Further north, mining companies are eyeing large bauxite deposits in the Krishnadevipeta-Gudem area of Andhra's Visakhapatnam district. The Department of Environment has called for environmental impact reports for the proposed alumina and steel plants that are coming up at Visakhapatnam and Paradeep in Orissa. Iron ore mining, mostly for export, is already carpeting vast stretches with fine ore dust in the Bailadilla area on the northwest fringe of the ghats. Elsewhere shale skimmed in ore processing at the National Mineral Development Corporation's unit at Kirandul flows into the Sankini river turning it red. While the water has not yet been chemically analysed, trees along the river are dying.

There are a few bright spots. Recently Vice-Admiral M.K. Roy, flag officer commanding, Eastern Naval Command and president of the Andhra Pradesh Natural History Society, ordered naval exercises off the Orissa coast near the Bhitar Kanika mangrove swamps, home of saltwater crocodiles and the breeding ground of open-billed storks and Ridley sea turtles. The sudden heavy influx of sailors surprised turtle poachers who promptly fled. Several thousand turtles were saved from certain massacre.

But the Bhitar Kanika success is not typical. More often simple decisions to protect the environment are delayed till problems reach a point of no return. That is already the case in many areas in the Eastern Ghats and unless the environmentalists get down to serious business, the natural resources of the region may soon be out of reach.

—AMARNATH K. MENON in Visakhapatnam

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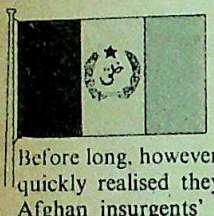
AFGHANISTAN

War Of The Air Waves

"This is Radio Free Afghanistan and my name is Vladimir Bukovsky," says the voice in flawless Russian. In tautly-structured but elegant prose, the 'voice' makes a passionate and evocative appeal to its listeners comparing the war in Afghanistan with the Nazi occupation of the Soviet Union in World War II. The 15-minute broadcast ends with the not-so-subtle allusion to defy orders: "You should remember that Nazi war criminals were condemned for following orders."



THE listeners to this broadcast were, ironically, Russian soldiers huddled together in camps near Kabul. Before long, however, the stunned Russians quickly realised they were listening to an Afghan insurgents' well-coordinated clandestine radio network. The voice of Bukovsky was also genuine. Vladimir Bukovsky was none other than the renowned Russian dissenter, who had spent much of his adult life in prisons and psychiatric hospitals before being allowed to leave the Soviet Union in 1976. In the next few days, Russian troops in Afghanistan listened to taped orations in Russian from such celebrities as Maximov and a profoundly moving statement from General Petro Grigorinko. Elsewhere, a different scenario was being played out in tiny Afghan villages and hamlets. At 8 p.m. primitive loudspeakers appeared on roof-tops and beamed a half-hour broadcast in Pushtu and Dari which contained, besides exhortations to fellow Afghans, condensed news bulletins on world events especially those in Poland.

Mastermind: The clandestine broadcasts which went on the air in September last year signalled the start of a new psychological war aimed at both Russian troops and pro-Babrak Karmal Afghans in Afghanistan—a strategy reminiscent of Japan's "Tokyo Rose" broadcasts to American forces in World War II. But who would have ever guessed that Afghanistan's radio-warfare was in fact meticulously conceived and executed from Paris by a blue-ribbon group of distinguished French and Italian intellectuals? Among the leading activists were the controversial French philosopher, Bernard-Henry Lévy, artist and writer Marek Halter and the Italian, Renzo Rosselini.

Bernard-Henry Levy—whose initials B-HL are now as celebrated as BB (Brigitte Bardot) in France—has in recent times been hailed by even such discerning publications as *Les Nouvelles Litteraires* as Jean Paul Sartre's "only true heir". Marek Halter, a hulking, brooding man with a luxuriant beard, is an artist and writer of distinction. A Polish Jew from the infamous Warsaw ghetto, one of his books, an intensely-moving autobiography, won the prestigious "Prix Aujourd'hui". Renzo Rosselini is the son of the celebrated Italian film-maker and one who has gained considerable fame in Europe as the architect of Rome's flourishing free-radio system. He set up the country's first free radio a decade ago and today Rome boasts of possessing the continent's most dynamic free radio network.

What goaded these intellectuals—which includes Nobel Prize-winning physicists, novelists, painters, musicians and others—was the apparent impotence of effete western governments towards Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Under former French president Valery Giscard d'Estaing, the French government had made desultory efforts to summon an international conference on Afghanistan. The Mitterrand Government has striven to be more emphatic and forthright in its vigorous anti-Soviet stance but has not trained its sights on events in Kabul. According to this group, other western European governments have all been emasculated and supine.

To their credit, some private French institutions have sprung into action, acting as relief organisations and providing food and medical aid. Paris-based organisations like Amis de l'Afghanistan, Medecins sans Frontiere, Action Internationale Contre la Faim and Medecins du Monde have done outstanding relief work by way of sending overland caravans loaded with food, clothing and medication into Afghan interiors. This has been of vital importance since the Soviet-bolstered Afghan Government has steadfastly refused to permit the International Red Cross, Amnesty International and other organisations to cross into the country. Thus, despite the lack of a coordinated multinational assistance, this trickle of private aid has been largely helpful not only to the estimated three million refugees massed at the Pakistan border and now acknowledged as the largest diaspora in the world, but also to those inside Afghanistan.

Commitment: The intellectuals' group went one step further. For the first time, a private group of citizens decided to openly aid the Afghan insurgents. Halter explained at length to INDIA TODAY: "There is no confusion about why we are doing thing. We are doing it on principle policy of the big and the powerful s ing the weak and the defenceless pletely immoral. As men of conscie must make it our business to prote protest loudly—if these so-called powers—be it the USA USSR—trample upon the vulnera

Halter, Lévy, Rosselini, Edgar Alfred Kassler and others insist t have nothing to do with guns and nition. But they came up with the idea of setting up a powerfu network—Radio Free Afghanistan nch a "relentless psychological warfa nst both Russians and Afghans". T was one way of coalescing the powe mind against 'totalitarian systems'. than "Tokyo Rose", they see it more General De Gaulle's broadcast London over "Free France Radio" World War II.

This high-profile group claims not an organisation like the Amnes national nor a civil rights associatio being dismayed by atrophied off action, they launched an appeal for the French and the Italian media. In they had raised 300,000 francs (Rs 4 Planning with scrupulous vigila sophistication, they proceeded step They established contacts with diff bel factions in Peshawar and held discussions. It was ultimately de fabricate specially-designed tra which would be lightweight and r sturdy enough so that they could b transferred from one mountain t another. It would also have to b enough so that its signals could be a radius of at least 50 km. The tra would also have to be designed s frequencies could be rapidly chang

The primary question was the Both Pakistan and Iran vehemently the initial idea of installing the tra inside their territory. Both com that they would have nothing to d radio network meant for clandes paganda. Ultimately it was decided have to be based inside Afghanis right under the noses of Soviet tro

Strategy: The daring scheme the final fabrication of 36 transmit would cover all of Afghanistan an overall cost was estimated at $2.5 22.5 lakh). A group of young Fre nicians were selected to fabricate

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der Rosselini's supervision. The ge of the project was to train the for the Pushtu and Dari language s and also to help them attain the erate and repair the transmitters. stage was to tape the Russian broadcasts of renowned Russian based in Paris and London. The the toughest task was to surre- transfer the transmitters into an and install them.

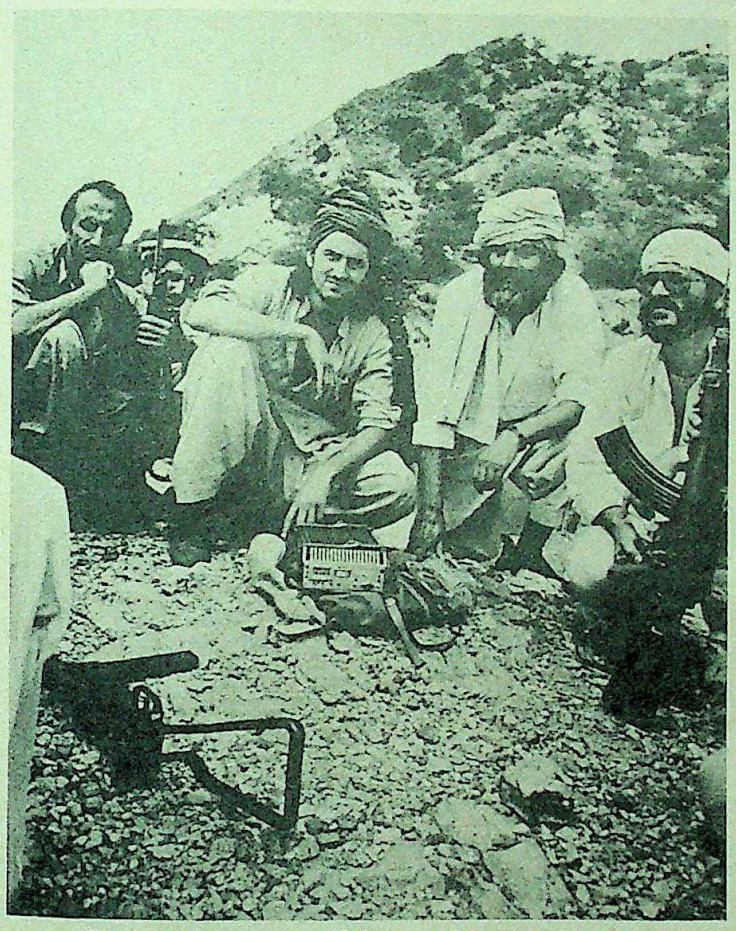
irst four parts of the plan were hieved. The crucial task of smug- transmitters into an, organise the first on and prudently e fractious insurgent jointly operate the rs was undertaken by y, Rosselini and two ech technicians.

clock-and-dagger obviously meant nternational bound- ations and since such group of figures were t could have lead to diplomatic row. "We one bit," says Hal- ere not representing fficially and we are tizens. Private people efy those who defy al law and ethics." ter and his famous effect argue is that little patience with the claptrap that rnational diplomacy. e-member team em- their stealthy mission ear with the first con- of the three specially transmitters. After ntacts with insurgent Peshawar, the group ely slipped into an and headed for the close to Kabul and in the Kunar Valley. e "inaugural broadcasts" could d in the capital. Photographs dition show Lévy trying to look l-bred Pathan, his Raphaeles- hidden behind a pirate-tailed

ge: For the trio the toughest o convince their hosts to forge a t. Some of the older fighters their faces when they heard the stern complaint about the abject the resistance fighters. One wi- logian apparently pointed out unity of the Afghans was their Each valley had its own com- manders, its own troops, its own strategy to combat Soviet troops. When an insurgent was captured by Russians no amount of torture could elicit information about insurgent strategies since he did not have the faintest idea. The faction leaders had pointed out that it was in effect a Guevarian strategy that was beginning to unfold itself in Afghanistan—hundreds and thousands of Vietnams to combat imperialism and drive out the "chourawis" (Russians).

The rebel factions saw the future of their country as a choice between becoming another outer Mongolia or a neutral Finland. For the latter, it would mean elections, the full trappings of a democracy. But for the moment, it simply meant battling superior forces with ancient Lee Enfield rifles, captured Soviet arms or a few Kalashnikovs supplied by Egyptians manufactured in Soviet-built factories in that country.

After six days of arduous march, they had reached an undisclosed spot near Kabul. The first transmission went off clean as a whistle. The first night the granite-faced rebels heard "This is Radio Free Afghanistan—Afghans talking to Afghans" some of them were reportedly moved to tears.



(From right) Rosselini, Halter and Lévy in Afghanistan with the transmitter: psychological warfare

Among those working for the clandestine network are two ex-employees of Radio Kabul and also a woman, which is something unprecedented for Afghanistan.

The gradual progress of these transmissions have greatly impressed the rebels. Under continual pressure from the French group, for the first time since the Russians invaded Afghanistan in 1979, all the leading rebel groups signed a document of unity in February 1982. These included: the Harkat-e-Inquilab Islami; Hazbe-Islami (Maulawi Khalis group); Jabhai Islami; Jamiate Islami and the Mahazi Mills Islami. According to the French, rebel leaders are beginning to concede that transmitters can be as potent as Kalashnikovs.

Questionable Gains: However, certain French specialists question the alleged gains attributed to the Afghan resistance which frequently appear in the Western media. The French point out, with their huge military wherewithal, the logistic advantage of a common 1,050 mile border and few if any political repercussions to worry about at home, the Soviets can hunker down for a long time in Afghanistan, gradually fortifying enclaves. Even if the Afghan army continues to haemorrhage, the Russians have progressively taken more and more of the fighting. In fact, recent reports have indicated clear gains for Russian troops during their much-awaited spring offensive, especially in the Parwan province.

As for the insurgents, they have little choice but to keep their covert military heat on. Despite losses, they now seem determined to expand their radio warfare. A second consignment of transmitters is already on its way to Afghanistan whilst fabrication of the third and fourth lots are proceeding ahead at full steam in a small plant outside Paris.

The Soviets have been unable to stop the broadcasts so far or trace the phantom radio network. Attempts to confiscate transistors have met with little success. They are reported to be particularly riled at the Russian language broadcasts aimed at Russian troops. Soviet authorities realise the life of a Soviet conscript is lonely, grim and under attack in an inhospitable land. Perhaps, this makes them even more vulnerable to clandestine broadcasts.

—RAMESH CHANDRAN in Paris

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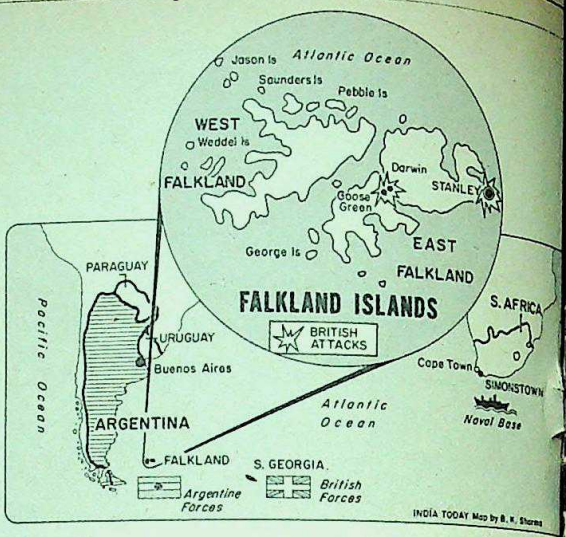
RUSSIAN ROULETTE

THE COUNTRY that could gain the most from the Argentina-Britain conflict in the Atlantic is the Soviet Union. Its desperate efforts to win over Argentina so far have come to naught but the Falklands crisis may give it the lever it needs. Already, according to reports, the Soviets have supplied Argentina with intelligence information on the British armada gleaned from their nuclear submarine listening posts in the south Atlantic and have also offered vocal support by officially condemning Britain's retaliatory measures.

The Soviets have vital interest in Argentina which is a major supplier of grain and meat to the Soviet Union. Seventy-five per cent of Argentina's grain exports go to the Soviet Union while Moscow sells Argentina enriched uranium and heavy water for its nuclear plants. The Soviets, however, would like a bigger economic stake in Argentina and, if the war escalates, Argentina could provide the Soviets with a lucrative arms deal.



BEGIN'S BIGGEST GAMBLE

HAVING checkmated his political opponents by handing over the last slice of the Sinai last fortnight, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin may be planning his biggest gamble yet—announcement of a snap poll to consolidate his position. If he does, as Israel-watchers are predicting, he could not have chosen a better time. His Sinai coup has silenced the religious parties in the country's coalition Government, and considerably weakened the opposition Labour Party, whose criticism of Begin's hawkishness has disintegrated before his act of statesmanship in going through with the Sinai handover.

Begin: cashing in

In fact the Labour Party—Begin's biggest hurdle—have been proved wrong in their predictions that the Sinai issue would split the Government. Begin is widely expected to announce a poll for later this year to capitalise on his recent successes and increase his current wafer-thin majority of one in the Knesset.

MYSTERIOUS AIR CRASH

THE MYSTERY surrounding the death of the Algerian foreign minister Mohammed Benyahia in an air crash on the Iranian-Turkish border last fortnight goes deeper than initial reports indicate. Though Iran has predictably used the fatality to accuse Iraq of shooting down the Algerian aircraft, intelligence reports indicate otherwise. For Iraq to shoot down an Algerian aircraft with a high-ranking official on board would be suicidal since Algerian support is vital to them. What is more than likely is that the Algerian aircraft strayed into the path of an aerial dogfight between Iraqi and Iranian jets and was hit unintentionally.

Nor does Iran's claim that Benyahia was killed because he was engaged in secret mediation talks with Iran to end the Iran-Iraq war hold much water. Accompanying Benyahia on the flight was an official from Algeria's fisheries department as well as an official from the state-owned bank of Algeria—hardly the sort of people who would be engaged in delicate and secret negotiations.

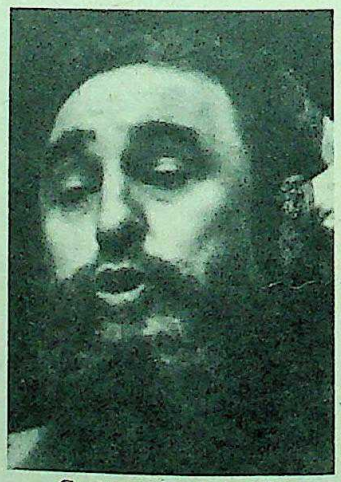
ARGENTINA'S EARLY WARNING

ONE COUNTRY that knew of Argentina's plans to inva Falkland Islands at least six months before it ac happened was South Africa. Late last year Argentina's ch staff, General Mario Menendes, currently Military Governor Falklands, visited South Africa. His mission: to find out wh South Africa would offer Britain use of Simonstown nava (abandoned by Britain in 1976) if Argentina captured the Falk and the British attempted to recapture the islands.

Though South Africa has remained neutral on the c Falklands crisis, one reason why it did not alert Britain Argentina's plans is because it is part of SATO (South A Treaty Organisation), a murky, unofficial grouping establis 1977 which includes Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay wh pledged to aid each other in the event of armed blockades

THE CUBAN MUDDLE

THERE seems to be a significant difference of opinion Reagan Administration over Cuba and its leader Fidel C US Secretary of State Alexander Haig has been making moves to wean Castro from the Soviets and cl the US. Last December met secretly with top C officials, including th president, in Mexico Cit talks remained a secr barely two weeks later Pres Reagan stated in an int that Cuba should take look and see if it want rejoin the western hemi


Castro: mixed signals

In March, Vernon ters, former deputy direc the CIA, held a meeting Castro in Havana, and th month a senior Cuban o told a group of visiting can reporters that Cub ready to negotiate "agree of mutual restraint" with the US. However, since April, W White House and State Department spokesmen have retra their anti-Cuban tirades, killing any success Haig may achieved in his mission.

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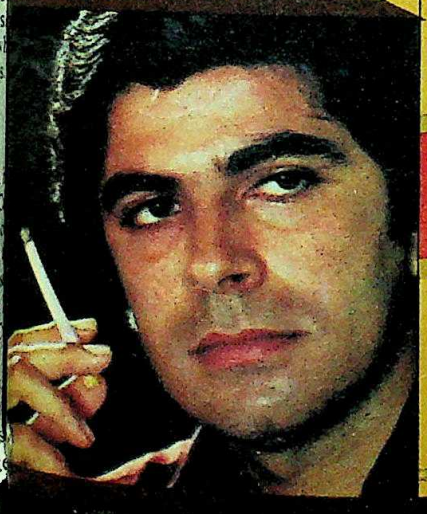
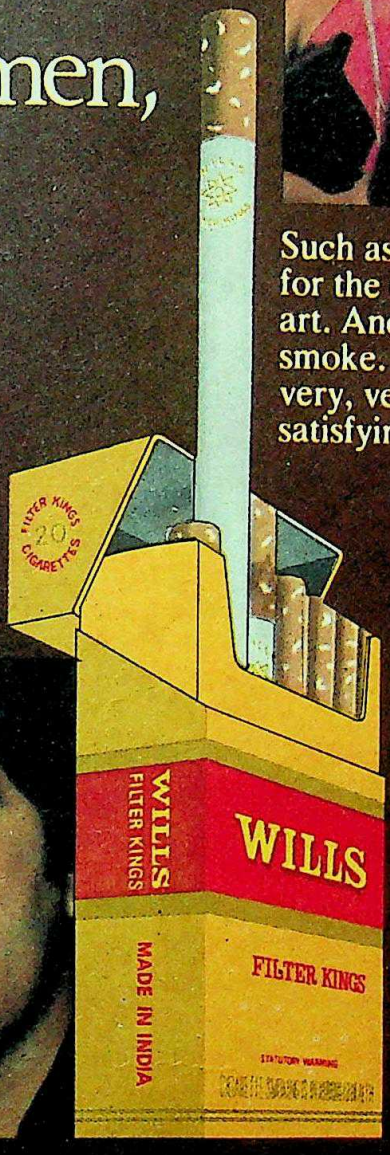
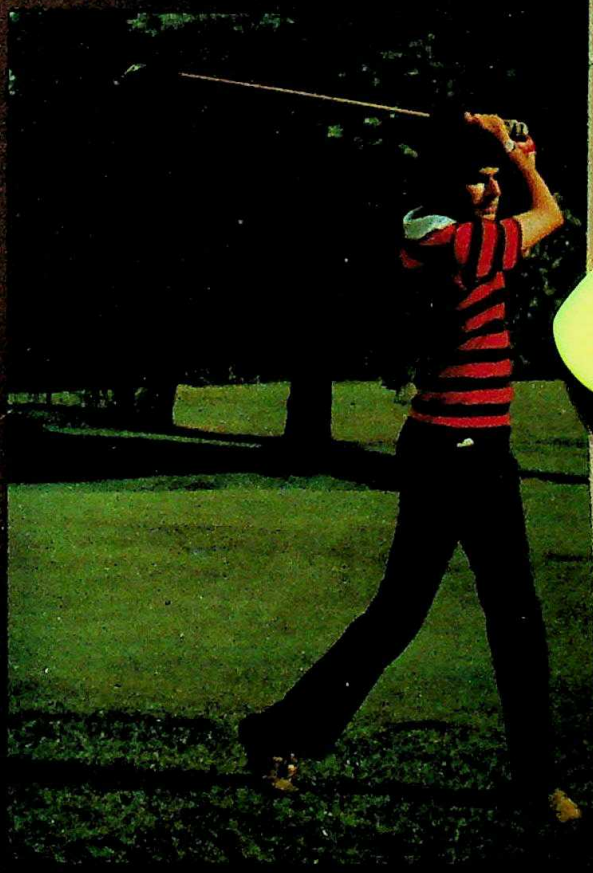
For some men, things always go smoothly.

Such as getting first night tickets. Getting par for the course in golf. Getting a rare piece of art. And getting the experience of a truly great smoke. Wills Filter Kings. Rich, mellow—and very, very smooth. For some men, it's most satisfying.







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Wills Filter Kings
Wills excellence.
In kingsize.

CIGARETTE SMOKING IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH

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Now for the first time you can serve this wide range of tasty foods right at home!

Pity! We have to go out to eat many of the mouth-watering foods we love. Waffles and cakes, open and closed toasted sandwiches, pizzas, grilled chicken, sheesh kababs — tasty snacks and solid meals are served mostly in fancy restaurants.

Modern kitchen marvel

But not any more! Now the makers of Hawkins pressure cookers, after 6 years of development based on international trends in modern kitchen appliances, bring you a system that combines the best of such products in Europe and America. Indeed, the Twink Inframatic Cuisinette gives you a system of cooking that doesn't exist anywhere else!

107 tested recipes

Pressure Cookers & Appliances have not only developed this appliance but a system of using it for an extremely wide variety of foods and snacks specially selected for the modern Indian taste. A Cook Book with 107 tested recipes comes free with every Twink Inframatic Cuisinette.

Teflon-II for healthy cooking

Twink Inframatic Cuisinette has 4 distinct cooking surfaces — all coated with Du Pont's non-stick Teflon-II. Fortunately, the sumptuous snacks you can serve anytime need not make you or your family count calories, because of the possibility of low-fat cooking.

Infra-red for super speed

The infra-red energy turns out a feast for your family and friends, in minutes! What's more, the Twink Inframatic Cuisinette system is so compact you can even use it on your dining table. Everybody can join in the fun!

Super speed chart

Item	Time
Cakes	6 minutes
Chicken	6 minutes
Paneer	1 minute
8 Closed toasted sandwiches	5 minutes
4 Open toasted sandwiches	8 minutes
Waffles	4 minutes
Sheesh kababs	8 minutes

Cooked in super-compact, super-fast

new TWINK INFRAMATIC CUISINETTE®

From the makers of Hawkins® Pressure Cooker

Makes eating in as excitin as eating out!

Come, taste and see

For the address of the Tw Inframatic Cuisinette De tration Centre nearest to y write to Pressure Cooker Appliances Ltd., 306, Ut Mandir No. 2, 7-C Pitam Lane, Mahim, P.O. Box Bombay 400 016. Act no take advantage of a very s introductory offer!

Special introductory

If you buy the Twink Infra Cuisinette between May and June 30, 1982, and cash memo and guarante to reach us by July 15, 19 will send back Rs. 101. special gift to our first cust

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NO LEVIS FOR INDIA

LEVI Strauss, the world-famous manufacturer of jeans, has finally decided against collaborating with Indian companies to make Levi jeans for the Soviet and East European markets. Levi Strauss had been talking to at least two Indian manufacturers for several months, but has now pulled out partly because the prices quoted were not attractive and partly because of the Reagan Administration's heavy-handed disapproval of trade ties with the Soviet Union following the Polish crackdown. Indian jeans manufacturers, who probably sell more jeans in the Soviet Union than in India, had been hoping to make a killing with the Levi brand name.

Other deals may still be zipped up—with Pierre Cardin, for instance. Though nothing has materialised as yet, talks are reportedly still under way for turning out jeans and other denim-wear for the European and American markets, using the Cardin tag. But even if a deal is pulled off, the quantity is likely to be small because of the limited Indian export quota for jeans. The value added may be even less, since the cloth, zippers and buttons will probably have to be imported.

NGE IN THE DRAIN

AMENT's Public Accounts Committee delivered a knock to the image of free trade zones last fortnight, held up the candle to what is happening at the 17-year-old Free Trade Zone in Gujarat. Of every Rs 100 of exports one, the committee says, three-quarters were to the Soviet hich pays not in dollars but rupees. The actual foreign earned was therefore only Rs 25. But to earn this, the units at Kandla imported raw material worth Rs 50—in change. The implication is obvious: there is a net drain of change because of the activities of the export zone! r supposedly dollar-earning activities appear to be result- similar loss of foreign exchange. Parliament's other committee, on public undertakings, highlighted last the record of the Engineering Projects (India) Ltd, whose ion projects abroad led to a net loss of Rs 41.51 crore in change between 1978 and 1981. Yet another report hat the public sector Electronics Trade and Technology ment Corporation has been exporting 12-inch television $50 (Rs 450) at a loss per set of $10 (Rs 90).

TURING THE MARKET

THOSE in search of case studies of successful modern an enterprise Modi Rubber Ltd provides arguably the best . The company was incorporated just 11 years ago, and roducing tyres in 1974. Today it leads the field in the on of automotive tyres. Its initial installed capacity of 4 es was subsequently re-estimated as 7.64 lakh tyres. on last year was 9.21 lakh tyres. The company now holds intent for manufacturing a further 5.75 lakh tyres. On top he Modi group acquired control last December of Bombay rmerly Firestone), which has an installed capacity of 11 s. This makes for a total capacity of 24.39 lakh tyres. Add to dvantage being taken of rules permitting production in licensed capacity, and the picture is one of clear market ce. According to one estimate, the Modis now control 35 and 40 per cent of the total tyre market; moreover, bber has made the maximum use of taxation policies: the has yet to pay a paisa as tax on its profits.

COME CONTRAST

PUBLIC sector has bobbed dramatically out of the red ink which it had dived in 1980-81. The preliminary estimates companies owned by the Central Government show a profit of Rs 412.82 crore in 1981-82, in happy contrast to the Rs 182 crore loss incurred in 1980-81.

The Government claims this improvement is the result, not of higher prices, but of higher production. But that is not strictly true. Higher prices for oil, coal and a number of other items have contributed substantially to the profits. The Oil and Natural Gas Commission, for instance, has upped its profits from Rs 46 crore in the previous year to Rs 374 crore. The other petroleum producer, Oil India Ltd, has contributed Rs 74 crore.

Most undertakings owned by the state governments also continue to be problem children. The worst undertakings remain electricity boards and the road transport corporations.

BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

IN A MAJOR trade dispute, India has hauled the United States before the world trade overseer, GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade). The provocation is the American imposition of countervailing duties on Indian exports of industrial fasteners, manhole covers and leather footwear. In one case, this has been done without establishing, as required, that Indian exports are injuring American industry. In the case of footwear, the duties have been slapped on with retrospective effect from January 1980. And the duties generally outweigh the cash support which the Government provides to such exports. Such cash support is legitimate under GATT to the extent that it neutralises indirect taxes levied by the Government on exported items. So the US action clearly oversteps GATT limits. India is treating the matter seriously.

PUT UP OR SHUT UP

WEST BENGAL's very ancient jute industry is modernizing—at last. A number of jute mills have started moves to install the latest high-speed machines, including spinning frames that work at 18,000 rpm. The existing frames manage 3,000 rpm.

But, as always, there is a catch. The industry wants Rs 300 crore from the Government to finance the machines' imports. And, on another plane, the trade unions are protesting that the new machines will throw nearly 40,000 people out of work. To which the industry's rejoinder is that if it does not modernize, it will quite simply have to close shop.

The industry, meanwhile, is also lobbying with the Government for a large export subsidy which, it says, is needed in order to meet the growing challenge from China, Thailand, Burma and Bangladesh, whose rates are said to be 25 per cent lower.

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PRODUCTIVITY

Caught In A Pincer

NOTHING ever goes smoothly in this country. It is always a matter of two steps forward, one step backward—sometimes even two steps backward. After two years of reasonably steady growth, things are beginning to falter. The Food Ministry has made much of last year's near-record harvest, but the increase has been only marginal and there are distinct signs that the green revolution is beginning to shed its verdant colour. In industry, as Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee keeps rubbing in, the growth rate has been twice last year's.

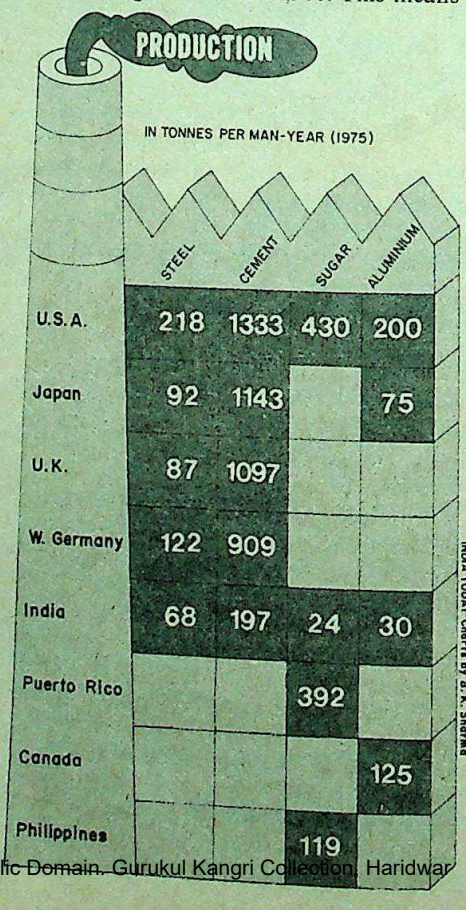
But he and his colleagues have been counting their chickens too soon, for businessmen in Bombay and elsewhere are saying—strictly for the ears of the Government of course—that the current credit squeeze might make nonsense of the best-laid plans of mice and men. The only plus point in an otherwise dismal setting is that inflation has been more or less reined in, but the cost in terms of output and growth has been killing and may leave its mark for months, if not years. But again, as Mukherjee says, you can't have everything.

Japanese Example: Can't you, really? How can Japan manage its affairs in such a way that it can have steady rates of growth—among the highest in the world—year after year, not only of gross national income but also of real wages and consumption, coupled with vast foreign trade surpluses that are the bugbear of every country on either side of the Atlantic? It is not all done with mirrors. It is all very well to say, with a dainty shrug of the shoulders, that the Japanese workers are rather a crazy lot who do not ask for index-linked wages, do not take their holidays, never go on strike and rarely waste their energy on processions and agitations. But this is only the froth on the beer. The punch line of the Japanese success story is quite different and one that is rarely mentioned in this country.

Over a period of seven years up to 1975, the productivity index in Japanese industry went up from 100 to 210, that is by about 15 per cent a year, consumer price index from 100 to 138 (5 per cent a year) and wage index from 100 to 225 (about 16 per cent a year), more or less on par with the productivity index. In fact, the bottom line is the productivity index: for without sizeable and steady increases in productivity—or output per man—no worthwhile progress can be made in any of the other areas. With increases in productivity, prices can be checked without resorting to credit squeezes and other restraints; total output goes steadily up, and with it the overall supply as well as demand. Since inflation is held at bay without any cutbacks in credit or output, wages can also be restrained and industrialists as well as workers have a feeling that their capital and labour are being put to good use.

Comparison: What has been the position in India? Figures are not easy to come by, for productivity is a vague concept that does not really figure in our mental calculus. Another reason may be that the figures are so depressing that nobody wants to stick his neck out by pointing out that the emperor is without his clothes. Going by national income data, there has been virtually no increase in net output per person throughout the 1970s, that is, from 1971 to 1980. In other words, throughout this period which has seen several governments come and go and several five-year plans made, re-made and scrapped, the nation's economy has sat smugly on its haunches without the slightest basic change in its overall internal performance.

In 1971, net output per employed person was Rs 19,400 per year; ten years later in 1980, the figure was Rs 19,900. This means



that real increase in output per ployed has been no more than Rs 9 or less than one rupee per week mouse that has emerged after the a mountain of nearly Rs 100,0 year, which is the total national Japan, the comparative figure is the order of Rs 6,000 a year—mo times the Indian figure and as go sure as any of the tremendous di the economic levels of the two co

The stagnation in productiv number of things. In manufact ductivity has gone up by about while in agriculture it has gon about 20 per cent. These are ma accounting for nearly 60 per c economic cake; but agriculture thrice as big as the industrial sec productivity increases in the latte they are, have been more or less e the declines in the farm sector. Fo the economy, there are only ma nges which do not affect much of t picture.

THE ECONOMY is thus c pincer movement of fallin productivity in agricultur slightly rising trend in industry, i economy as a whole virtually unc a really developing economy, th such contrary movements, prod industry being matched by produ nds elsewhere. In fact, the two m tandem, for one feeds on the Japan—as well as in most other including the United States a Germany—agriculture is as pro industry. In Soviet Russia it is no one reason why the Soviet eco struck a bad patch.

Productivity: The prime mini to declare 1982 as Productivity most people in India tend to co ductivity with production and a increased production would aut matically bring about matching output per man. This is not so. 1970s output did go up (by about but it had no impact whatsoev ductivity, for overall employme up and one cancelled the other. economy is one in which there increases in employment—in line lation increases—along with a in productivity. This is what Japa able to achieve and that is why there is radically different from o

High productivity is a su many factors, the most importa being capital and technology. T interrelated, for capital is also another form. According to Kaldor, each percentage additio

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utput requires a 0.5 per cent mployment and is associated with increase in productivity. Also, a recent study by the European Community (EEC), technology more than 50 per cent of growth come, its share being as high as in quite a few countries. combined with capital, ac- most of the growth in EEC d countries like Britain which shy of modernization and gone w technologies have suffered

arently, has India, going by the figures. The 3 per cent yearly

roductivity in industry is mainly modernization, confined as it is ain areas. The 2 per cent yearly productivity in agriculture is esult of lack of modernization in though wherever this has been th wheat and milk, the results ore than satisfactory.

ture in India is more than a way of life, and for that reason stant to change than any other. Bihar and Orissa are backward e they are relatively under- d (except in patches), but be- e under-farmed, both as regards well as technology. Peter's everyone rises to the level of his ce—applies to stagnant econ- all sectors fall to the lowest level ivity.

Gains: In industry the picture le better, but not all that good. ductivity in agriculture is falling, ers can make both ends meet only by asking for higher prices. High prices of foodgrains and other farm products affect wages as well as raw material inputs; and since productivity in industry is not rising as fast as it should, businessmen are under pressure to increase their prices in a ceaseless effort to keep up their profits. This is true of the private sector as well as the government-owned industries—more so in the latter case—which explains the steady increases in the so-called administered prices of coal, steel, cement, power, aluminium and other inputs over the last few months.

Pranab Mukherjee said in Parliament last week that the public sector had come out of the woods and was now making profits. It is certainly doing so, at least on paper, but not because of any radical change in its functioning or management. It is only a matter of time before the bottom line again turns red, and the Government is forced to order another round of price increases in order to maintain the so-called profitability.

The private sector is also more or less in the same position. There are companies—aluminium companies are a very good example—whose real output has been stagnant for the last decade but which are still making handsome profits and declaring not only equally handsome dividends but bonus issues also. Hindustan Aluminium produced 78,503 tonnes of primary metal (aluminium) and 23,316 tonnes of rolled and extruded products in 1972. Ten years later in 1981, it produced 77,306 tonnes of primary metal and 30,939 tonnes of other products. But its net turnover increased more than 3 times during this period from Rs 38 crore to Rs 117 crore—a rise of Rs 79 crore—nearly all of it just plain inflation. Its gross profit is also more or less stationary around Rs 7.2 crore, and so is the equity share dividend.

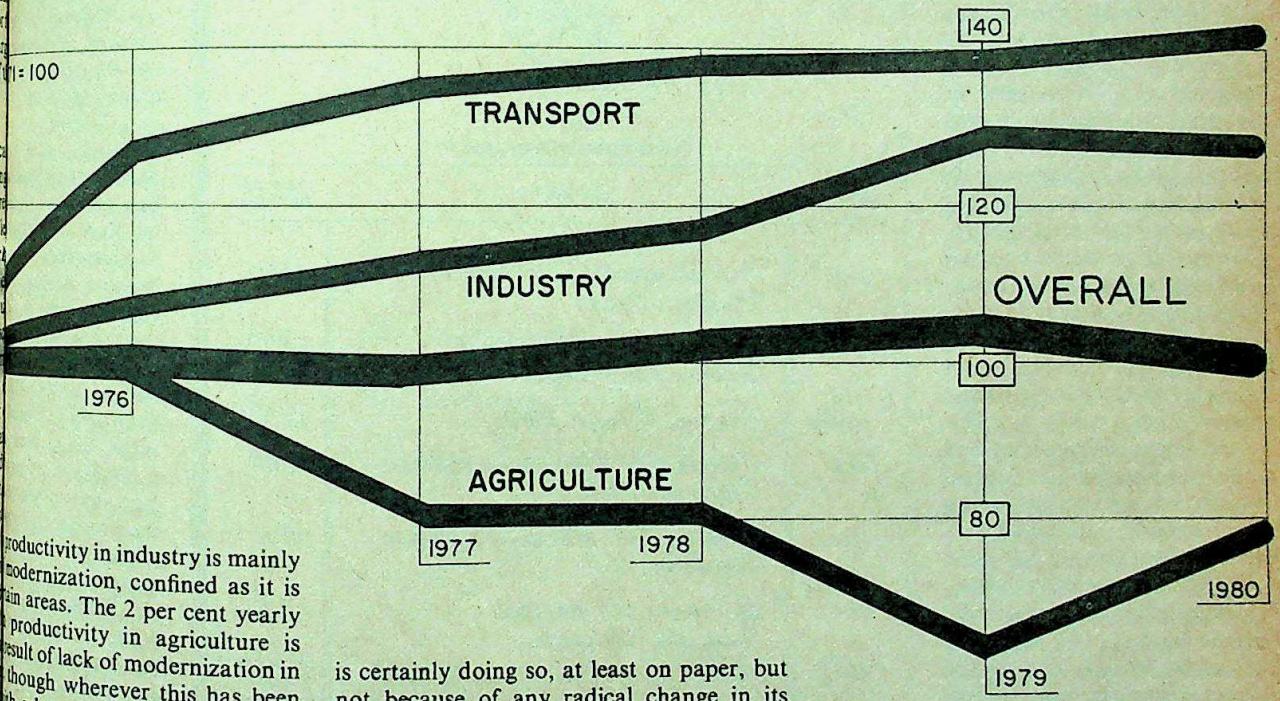
Bad Planning: Hindustan Aluminium is not an exception. Tata Steel's output has remained pegged at around 1.5 million tonnes of steel for the last 20 years, but the company's balance sheet is excellent and the word 'stagnation' is taboo in Jamshedpur. There are reasons why Tata Steel has not grown; but there are scores of such companies in which stagnation has resulted in fossilisation of productivity. If companies like Tata Steel and Hindustan Aluminium had been helped to put their best foot forward, the Indian economy would have had the capacity to absorb twice as much steel and three times as much aluminium as it does today.

It is only now, 20 years after its 2-million-tonne programme was completed, that Tata Steel is going in for modernization, although the delay was not of its choosing. Curbs on capital and technology in the name of monopoly or self-reliance are self-defeating, for ultimately, by slowing down growth, they affect capital formation itself. No wonder, the country is so short of capital that we have now to borrow abroad just to keep going.

—JAY DUBASHI

CTIVITY IN TROUBLE

Net Domestic Product Per Person Employed



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PROJECTS

India's Shopping Spree

IT'S THE biggest shopping spree in India's history. Giant contracts worth over Rs 7,000 crore have been signed in little over a year. Next year could see more such deals worth up to a staggering Rs 8,000 crore. Wide-eyed sellers have, understandably, much more to offer. The bill is for such diverse products as aircraft, cars, giant steel, fertiliser, aluminium, and power plants, telecommunication equipment, military hardware—almost anything the global supermarket has to offer.

Few other developing countries are shopping on this scale. If the Shah of Iran's flamboyant buying habits held the spotlight in the mid-'70s, to be followed in the late '70s by China's multi-billion dollar contracts in pursuit of the "four modernizations", India is today the unlikely contender for the title of global super-spender. Seeing India's hitherto sealed doors begin to open to the rest of the world, the salesmen have quickly pitched their tents, on the look-out for lucrative orders. Renault, Du Pont, Marconi, British Aerospace, Casio, Chevron and Ansaldo Impianti are among the many companies that have opened new offices here in the last two years.

In 15 months, no fewer than 50 chief executives of British companies have come looking for fresh business prospects. French companies have sent 40 chief executives, and Italian firms over a hundred. "You go to any hotel in your capital, and you will hear people speaking Italian," says Ottavio Quattrocchi, long-time representative in India for the Italian firm Snamprogetti. But also to be heard are Japanese, French, German, Belgian, American and Spanish tongues. Almost anyone who has anything to sell seems to be making a bee-line to India.

New Projects: International flights into Delhi have also unloaded numerous bankers, who anticipate massive borrowings by the Government to finance the new projects. Midland Bank of the UK is the latest to open a new office in Bombay, shortly after the Indo-Suez Bank set up shop in the city. In the queue with licence applications now are Credit Suisse of Switzerland, Barclays Bank of the UK, the Bank of Qatar and the Imperial Bank of Commerce and Bank of Montreal from Canada.

None of this is surprising, for the potential for business has been mind-boggling. The contracts already entered into are staggering:

► Rs 2,500 crore for a new steel plant in Orissa

► Rs 1,350 crore for an aluminium complex in Orissa

► Rs 2,000 crore for two giant power stations in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh

► Rs 1,200 crore for French Mirages for the air force

► Rs 200 crore for a new car project in Haryana.

Other massive deals are either in the offing or being negotiated:

► Rs 8,000 crore for eight 1,000 MW power plants are on offer from Japan, Italy, Canada, France, West Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and Romania

► Rs 1,000 crore for two fer... plexes, with money offered by It...

► Rs 600 crore for developing ... near Bombay: offers from Brit... Italy

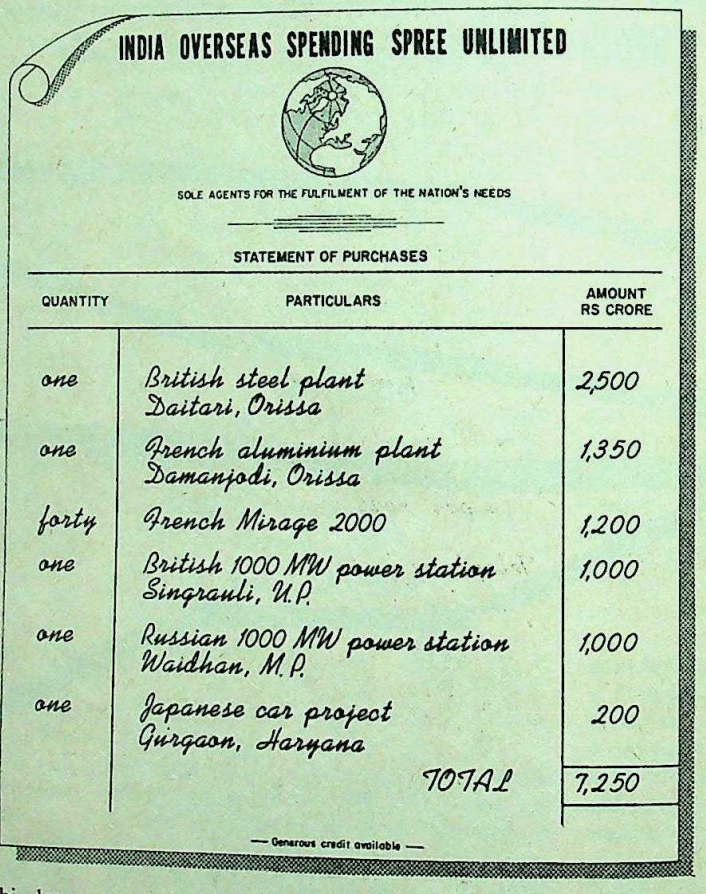
► Rs 240 crore for a variety ... to manufacture telephone instr... telephone exchange equipment

► Smaller contracts and offer... line for oil prospecting, colour ... tubes, aircraft and ... defence merchandi... transport planes, ... tanks, missiles, subm... guns.

There is bitter c... for each of these con... of the biggest i... communication gia... ging it out for th... exchange order: Bel... Manufacturing fro... Siemens from Italy, ... tel and CSF-Thor... France, GEC from ... per, deput... Nippon Electric, H... Fujitsu from Japan. ... craft sweepstakes th... between Airbus In... Boeing, both in que... from Indian Airlin... India, while British ... is making its own ... Vayudoot, there ha... tense lobbying by d... Dornier, Fokker, ... Short Brothers.

Outlandish P... most of the other ... being considered, ... companies are vying ... the orders, or are ... ideas for the Govern... with: Information ... casting Minister Vasant Sa... talking of setting up a video ca... der in each village in the next fi... Rs 25,000 per set, the money ... Rs 1,250 crore. Other ministers ... similar outlandish proposals, an... national companies are licking ... In the process, what started ... measured trot through the wi... market has quickened to a can...

Foreign governments, stru... recession-hit economies, are ... own heavy-handed tactics to lobb... tracts. The Swedish Prime ... Thorbjorn Fälldin, flew in last Ja...



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made a return call looking for
orders. The Railway Minister,
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don to take a closer look at
Meanwhile, several visits have
by representatives of Short
e Northern Ireland aircraft pro-
hope to sell as many as 200 of
their Skyvans to Vayudoot, the Coast Guard, the Border Security Force and the air force. Quipped a government official: "Sometimes I get the feeling that the East India Company has landed here again."

BEHIND the increasingly frenetic buying of equipment and technology, however, is a strong desire to modernize and expand the economy. "We have to step forward quickly, and progress fast," says C.P.N. Singh, minister of state for science and technology.

All too often in the past, projects in key sectors have dragged on endlessly. The expansion of the Bokaro steel plant will take 12 years instead of five; power projects have traditionally taken twice as long as they should and the last Five-Year Plan achieved only half the projected expansion in power capacity. The plans as a whole have achieved only 60 per cent of what they promised, resulting in either endless shortages of all manner of goods or large-scale imports. In key sectors like automobiles, defence, communications and machinery, the technology in use is embarrassingly outdated.

The acquisitive spree abroad signifies a search for solutions to chronic problems by turning to those who can offer the latest technology and equipment, and to those who can create fresh production capacity quickly.

The results are expected to be dramatic. Because of project delays, the addition to steel capacity in the last 15 years has been a scandalously small 1.7 million tonnes. In contrast, the two new turnkey steel plants will add 4.5 million tonnes in four years. If even half the power station offers are accepted, the new 5,000 MW capacity will easily end the power shortage. New capacity in aluminium, fertiliser and steel could save imports of over Rs 1,500 crore annually. And the new port at Nhava-Sheva should end the crippling port congestion at Bombay, which cost Rs 95 crore in demurrage charges alone in the last two years, not to speak of downstream costs because of delayed loading and unloading.

Inviting: The foreign apple is inviting. In deciding to bite, however, the Government has had to do an about-turn in economic policy. Two decades have been invested in an effort at self-reliance, creating in the process both the capacity and the capability to handle heavy engineering work and project management. The current search for answers abroad to problems at home accepts implicitly the failure of past strategy, even as it lays the Government open to the charge of bypassing domestic suppliers while shopping abroad.

Nevertheless, there are several reasons propelling Indian decision-makers into the international market-place. Says T.R. Satishchandran, secretary in the Energy Ministry: "The foreign bidders are promising us money that we don't have. Without the funds, we wouldn't have the projects anyway, so there is no question of Indian companies losing orders to foreigners." As much as 60 per cent of a Rs 10,000 crore bill could be financed through loans and aid.

The British thermal power station bid has been accepted primarily because of a financial package that combines aid, export credits and commercial loans that together will meet the full project cost. Britain's Davy McKee won the Daitari steel contract because of the same consideration. Now Italy has offered aid tied to the orders for two new fertiliser projects being given to Snamprogetti, a subsidiary of the Italian government-owned ENI combine. The offer was made when Mrs Gandhi visited Italy last November, and the Government seems in-

INDIA OVERSEAS SPENDING SPREE UNLIMITED

SOLE AGENTS FOR THE FULFILMENT OF THE NATION'S NEEDS

STATEMENT OF PENDING PURCHASES

QUANTITY	PARTICULARS	AMOUNT RS CRORE
eight	1000 MW power stations	8,000
two	Fertiliser plants	1,000
one	New port near Bombay	600
few	Telephone factories	240
	TOTAL	9,840

— Generous credit available —

INDIA TODAY Charts by B.K. Sharma

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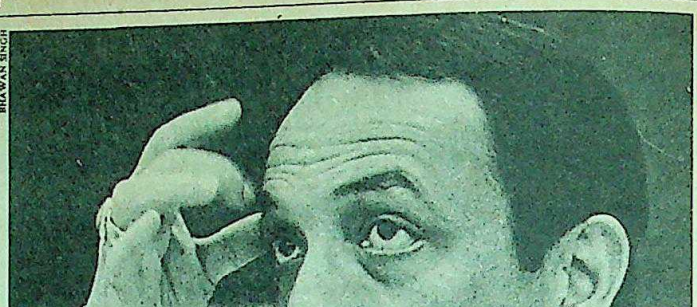
clined to accept it.

Modernization is yet another objective behind the shopping spree. A virtually closed economy for 20 years has fallen behind the rest of the world in crucial areas and is stuck with technologies that belong properly in a museum. Cars provide one example, telephones another. "Tying up contracts and collaborations in these areas will give us access to the latest and best in both technology and equipment," says C.P.N. Singh.



BHAWAN SINGH

C.P.N. Singh: the benefits of modernization

The contract which the Communications Ministry wants to sign with Face Standard (ITT's Spanish subsidiary) promises a new telephone instrument which the ITT representative shows off by throwing on the floor: the instrument is virtually unbreakable, ultra-light, easy on the eye, and offers a push-button system as a substitute for the dial, apart from a memory that allows you to repeat the last number called at the press of a button—useful when called numbers are so often engaged. The cost per instrument is claimed to be Rs 200, against the present instrument cost of Rs 320. A factory that produces a million pieces annually will save Rs 12 crore: enough to pay for the whole contract with ITT.

Advantages: The benefits of modernization are equally apparent elsewhere: Suzuki cars will give at least 50 per cent more mileage than the Ambassador and Premier; Wilkinson Sword and Gillette's entries into the blades market promise blades and shaving systems of international quality; two-wheelers in collaboration with Yamaha, Piaggio, BSA and others will lead a mini-motorcycle boom; computerised railway operations will improve wagon use to such an extent as to add to the railways' carrying capacity by more than 30 per cent; and new tie-ups with Citizen and Seiko of Japan have put India on the time-machine into the electronic watch age.

The truck industry is about to see a mini-revolution: DCM has tied up with Toyota for manufacturing medium trucks, and three others have sewn up contracts or are about to do so, all of them with Toyota's rivals in Japan. The Punjab State Industrial Development Corporation is importing a full-fledged colour TV picture tube plant from Finland with a capacity to produce 400,000 colour picture tubes annually. And in the last three months alone, approvals have been given for buying no fewer than 500 computers.

Across a wide range of other industries, foreign collaborations have helped in modernization and expansion: collaborations almost doubled to 526 in 1980 over 1979, then dipped slightly in 1981 but are now set to increase this year by 50 per cent to well over 600. "We are opening up in areas where a wide technology gap exists and where we are hit by lack of viability," says C.P.N. Singh.

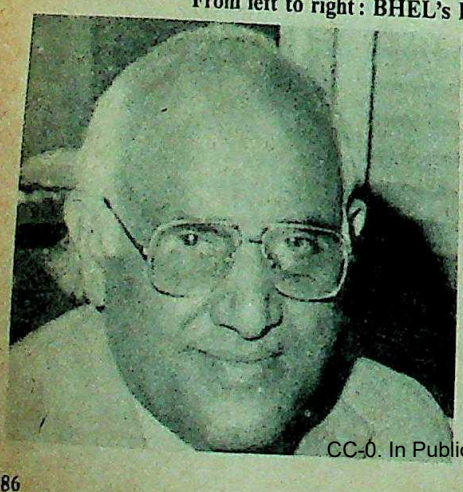
Part of the modernization is, of course, in defence equipment. The sums are undisclosed, as in some cases are the contracts themselves. But confirmed already are the deals for buying submarines, Jaguars and Mirages; and talks are on for acquiring MiGs, Soviet transport aircraft, helicopters, missiles and guns. The defence bill alone could be of Rs 4,000 crore, almost certainly no developing country that has itself on an equivalent of arms acquisition.

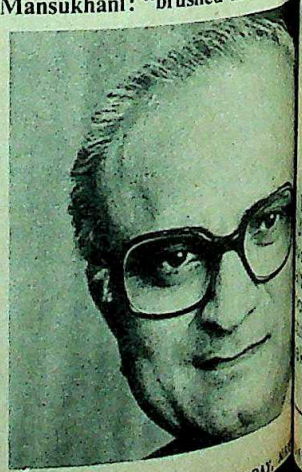
SPEED, finance, organization: do these justify all the contracts being entered into in the defence area? Will the contracts for steel, power and other projects to idle capacity in Indian industry? In opting for technology, is domestic research and development effort now going to waste? Is the baby being thrown out with the bathwater? And is India repeating the Chinese mistake of the late '70s, when foreign contracts had to be quickly signed as the money ran out?

The questions come easily. But the buying is so phenomenal, but the process difficult and complex, and often corrupt. In most of the new contracts, the money is coming from foreign governments as soft credits from foreign suppliers, or from commercial borrowings on the Euro-currency market. India's biggest ever commercial borrowing—$680 million (Rs 612 crore), has already been floated for the aluminium project. And a bigger billion dollar (Rs 900 crore) package will soon be up for grabs to help finance the Daitari steel project.

Inevitably, the country's foreign debt will grow rapidly, and repayment obligations could be twice as onerous in five years from now. "But we will still be within safe limits," says R.N. Malhotra, secretary of economic affairs in the Finance Ministry. "What India is not going overboard on is to take on new debt, or over-reaching itself as Turkey did—a view seconded by diplomats in Delhi who think the Government is sound.

From left to right: BHEL's K.L. Puri; BEL's N.L. Krishnan; HMT's T.V. Mansukhani: "brushed aside"





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g on financial burdens.
ia: Prominent among those who
opping spree with suspicion and
the men in charge of the
eavy industry backbone. One
brow furrows at the merest
power station imports is K.L.
ortly chairman of the Bharat
ricals Ltd (BHEL). Puri dashed off
Lucknow to persuade officials of
radesh State Electricity Board to
eir visit to Tokyo to negotiate a
package with Mitsui Ltd.
as just modernized much of its
and expanded capacity from
to 4,000 MW annually—enough,
meet the country's power needs
nt (Sixth) and the next (Seventh)
Plans. But orders are going to
Soviet Union, and perhaps to
Italy. "These foreign companies
rk," fumes Puri. "Capacity util-
eir plants is 40 per cent. So they
uipment quickly, while their
ts provide credit. Where do I get
to give credit to the Government

Krishnan, the bespectacled
irector of Bharat Electronics Ltd
ually concerned: "We told the
t we could produce digital wa-

tches with our own technology at Rs 200 each. But the Government has chosen to go to the Japanese." The railways and the posts and telegraphs department have similarly "brushed aside" BEL offers of equipment and opted for imports of microwave and very high frequency (VHF) radio relay equipment.

The Hindustan Machine Tools (HMT) is another unit affected by the imports. Managing Director T.V. Mansukhani makes the point that the spree would not have been necessary if there had been advance planning. "This happens if we don't plan things in time." This is a sore point with numerous other companies who hoped to supply equipment for the various ground stations linked to INSAT. But decisions were taken at the last minute, and in all too many cases imports were ordered.

Even those not directly hit by the shopping abroad look askance at the new thrust. Says a public sector project executive: "We were taught 20 years ago that the country would never learn how to do things without taking on responsibility ourselves. But today we are once again going in for foreign turnkey contracts. I don't see how this is a step forward."

Arguments: Officials confess privately to doubts on yet other scores: the financial packages often have only a small aid content, and the delivery and commissioning schedules may not be met. The decade-old case is cited of two fertiliser contracts which were given to Toyo Engineering Corporation on a turnkey basis. Commissioning should have taken place in 36 months, but Toyo eventually took 60 months.

Despite doubts and criticisms, many bureaucrats and heavy equipment buyers do not buy the "protect indigenous industry" argument. Said a Defence Ministry official: "For 10 years, our scientists are supposed to have been designing a new battle tank for the '80s. They are no nearer their goal today than in 1972. Our defence needs don't wait. So what are we to do?" Said another official: "Look at the Bokaro and Bhilai expansion projects. They should have ended in 1977, but now they say we must wait till 1984."

The overriding argument in defence of the foreign shopping is simple: "The old approach in favour of developing self-reliance and doing everything ourselves has clearly failed to work. The benefits of the new approach are likely to be tremendous in terms of speeding up capacity expansion and industrial modernization. The demands are so large, and the requirements racing ahead so fast that there is simply no alternative to opting for, the quickest solution."

—T.N. NINAN with bureau reports

omersaults

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Limca. A zingi, tangi mixture of
amaican lime and Sicilian lemon
ours. A zero-bacteria drink. Isotonic
ts to quench your thirst. Vitamin C
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ke the scene with. Any thirsti time.

Limca is veri veri lime'n' lemoni

RADEUS PE L 10-82

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REMITTANCES

Opening The Tap

A COMMITTEE went into the subject two years ago, but it took a serious foreign exchange crisis to finally get the Government moving on ways to attract more remittances from Indians abroad.

Last month, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced a series of measures that opened up the Indian stock markets to investment by non-resident Indians. The limits on their share investments were raised, the list of industries open to them expanded, procedures and formalities simplified, and investments thrown open for the first time to foreign companies, trusts and societies in which non-resident Indian share is at least 60 per cent. In addition, the maximum interest offered on deposits in the non-resident (external) accounts with Indian banks was hiked from 10 to 12 per cent, and exemptions from the income, wealth and gift taxes offered on some forms of remittances.

Bold Step: It was a bold package aimed at arresting the worrying decline in remittances home by Indian nationals. Such remittances have provided a vital foreign exchange cushion since the mid-1970s. They were enough to ensure that the country's foreign exchange reserves kept rising despite growing trade deficits.

That happy situation changed in 1981, when the remittances began to drop off. The country's foreign exchange reserves plummeted from Rs 4,800 crore in March 1981 to Rs 2,500 crore in March 1982: an unprecedented drop. The Government was clearly worried, and in his last budget speech, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee announced that he was going to "improve the facilities available to non-residents".

Finance Ministry officials say they do not have precise estimates of the drop in remittances, but admit that the rate today is nowhere near the 1980–81 peak of Rs 2,500 crore. They blame this largely on the high interest rates now prevalent abroad, making deposits in Indian accounts unattractive. The hope is that investment in the shares of well-managed companies will prove an attraction even in today's high-interest world.

In its essence, the new package opens up a new avenue of investment in India that was not available earlier without going through endless formalities. That such a market existed became evident only last year, when the Gujarat Narmada Valley Fertiliser Corporation raised no less than Rs 15 crore in the form of share capital from non-resident Indians. Subsequent debenture issues by the Tata Iron and Steel Company and the Tata Engineering and Locomotive Company, as well as most recently by JK Synthetics, confirmed that the potential was indeed great. This was also the finding reported by Grindlays Bank after it sent a team to West Asia last year to assess the market.

Good Inflow: Says Sushil Dalal of the Bombay stockbroking firm Chimanlal Dalal & Co: "Even before these new incentives were announced, Indians abroad were interested in investing in Indian shares. We have been receiving a lot of enquiries from friends and associates abroad, and in our opinion the inflow will definitely be very good."

PRAMOD PUSHKARNA

Mukherjee: improving facilities

The obvious targets of the new incentives are the many wealthy Indians abroad, particularly those in West Asia and the Far East Asian countries. Most of them want a base in India because of the political uncertainties in the countries where they work.

Officials are reluctant to name a figure, but the expectation is that a few hundreds of crores of rupees will come in every year because of the new measures. In today's foreign exchange situation, that kind of inflow is very welcome.

Nevertheless, there were critics who argued that the new measures did not go far enough, and that even the simplified formalities, calling for various applications to the RBI, were too burdensome for the average Indian abroad. *The Economic Times* editorialised: "One only hopes that the 'ifs' and 'buts' of the procedures and details will not obliterate the overall philosophy of the new strategy."

But, explained Nitish Sengupta of the Finance Ministry: "These are things which the investor does not have to bother about personally. We have allowed the banks to operate on behalf of the inve... merely has to deal with his bank. T... between the bank and the RBI. I d... there is anything to complain abo...

Optimism: Sensing the opportunity, the Bank of Baro... announced the creation of a new ... will provide a comprehensive ... of investment services to no... Indians. Said Y.V. Sivaramak... chairman of the bank: "This cell wi... overseas investor identify ... investment avenues, select and ... shares, evaluate the options, ... dividends and get the requisite p... from the RBI." Added R.R. De... manager of the bank's merchant ... division: "There is just no doubt. T... will definitely succeed. We ... optimistic about this scheme."

Other banks were preparing ... the Bank of Baroda's lead. Last ... the State Bank of India and th... Overseas Bank (both of which ha... presence abroad) were getting ... announce their own package of s... non-resident investors. The Gove... now likely to wait for a couple of m... watch the response, and then stud... making the scheme more attrac...

Says Ashok Dayal, regional ... South Asia, for Grindlays Bank: "... welcome change in policy, but th... major problem which has not bee... the question of capital gains tax a... dividend incomes. There are va... which can be attracted to the count... would not like to launch an a... marketing campaign until these fisc... are cleared."

Suggestions for improvem... already coming in, and some of ... likely to be considered sympathet... proposal is to exempt dividends ... deduction at source, if the non... Indian is not otherwise liable to pa... tax. Another is to raise the limit of ... imposed on investment in any one ... Both these may be allowed soon.

Restrictions are, however, likely ... repatriation abroad of speculativ... the stock market. As an official ... "If a non-resident buys shares at Rs ... Rs 150 per share this week and se... next week at Rs 500, we will only lose ... exchange if we allow him to repatr... whole amount. Some restrictions ... necessary here. We want to en... investment, not speculation."

These prospective changes in ... flexible attitude to the new packa... underlined what an official descri... "determination to get the rem... flowing in again."

—T.N. NINAN with CHANDER LEKH...

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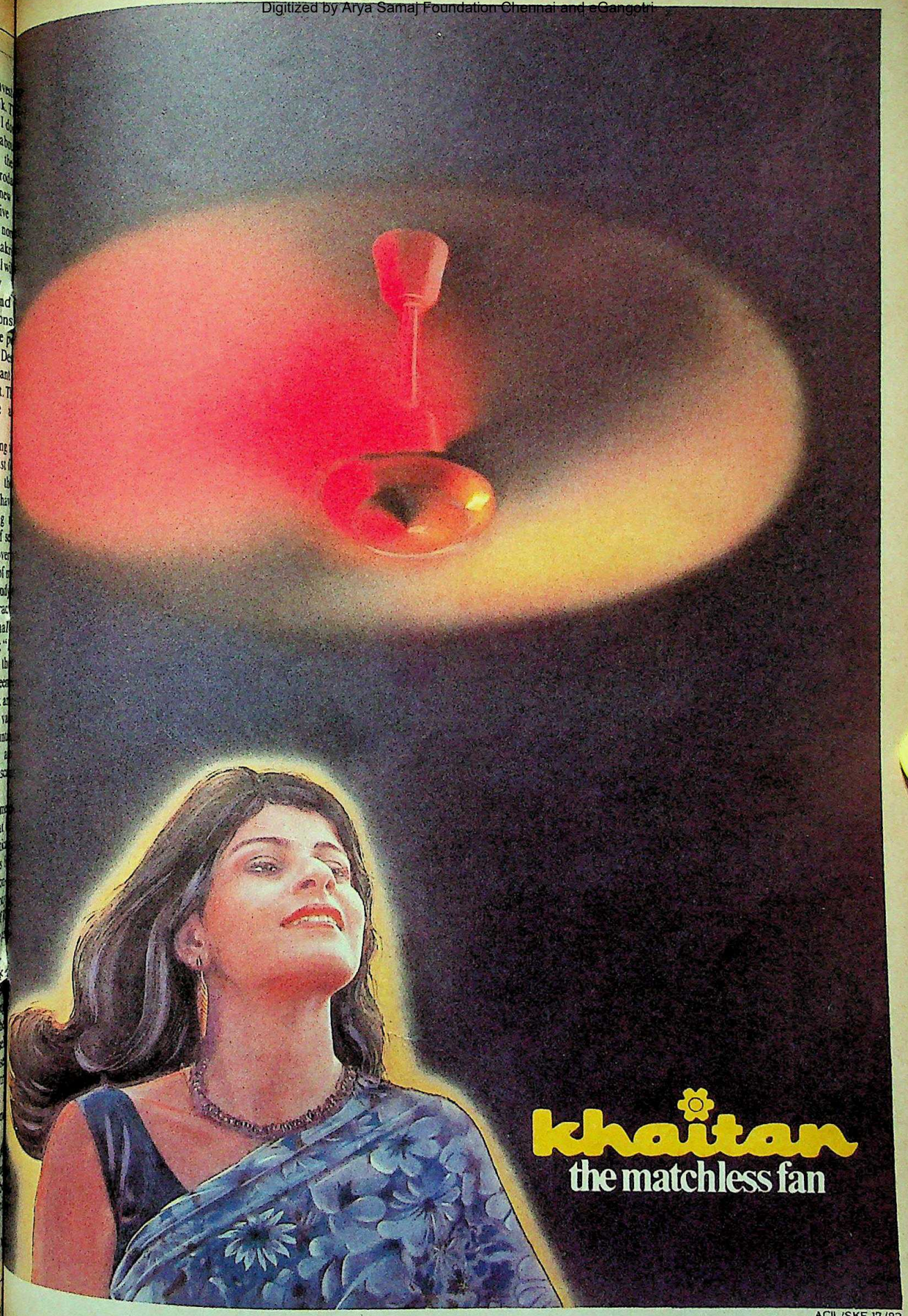

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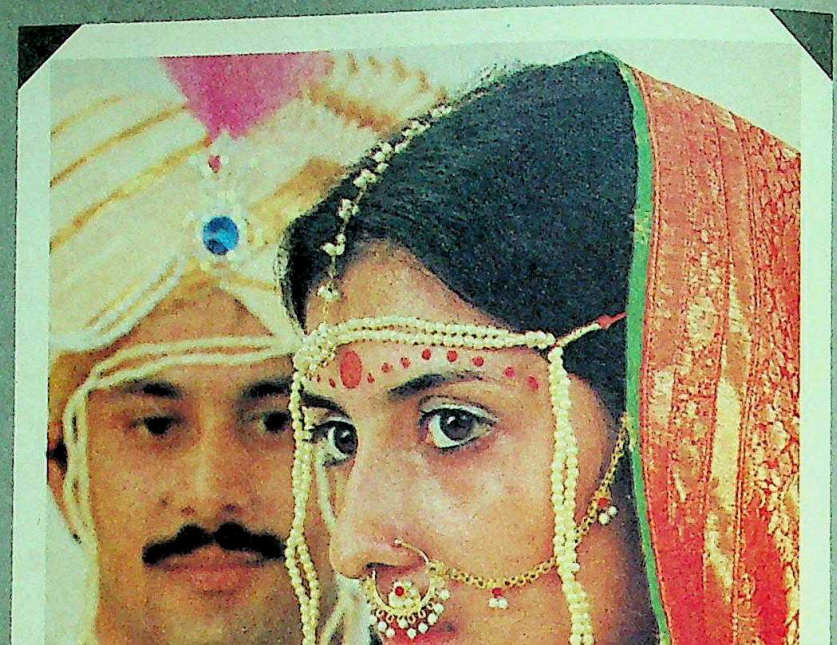

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iance Roulette

AD the makings of a best-selling ial thriller. In one corner of the was a brilliant industrial brain, rate manipulator and high-flying, hes entrepreneur who had ripped o the uppermost fabric of Indian barely 15 years. Pitted against syndicate of stock market men, cked by rival industrialists, with esources and the ingrained know- enerations of *satta* speculation. had been months of plotting with te foresight of chess players, in a h involved far more than just a The future of a giant industrial is at stake in the multi-crore ga- h, in 25 minutes of play, led to s 250 crore to even those investors bought other shares. The game horough disrepute to the giant tock exchange, which lists shares ies worth over Rs 4,000 crore, and n turnabout of fortunes, inflicted er Rs 3 crore on the investors who he syndicate.

me might well come to be known e Roulette. Last fortnight on the tock exchange, it reached its melo- finale in a vicious confrontation leading textile manufacturer Ambani of Reliance Textile and a group of bear speculators d to bring down the price of hares through large-scale selling. technique of short selling—where er sells shares he does not have in hat prices will fall and he will be cover" his sale by buying at the ices—the speculators on the stock had by April-end sold 11 lakh hares valued at over Rs 16 crore.

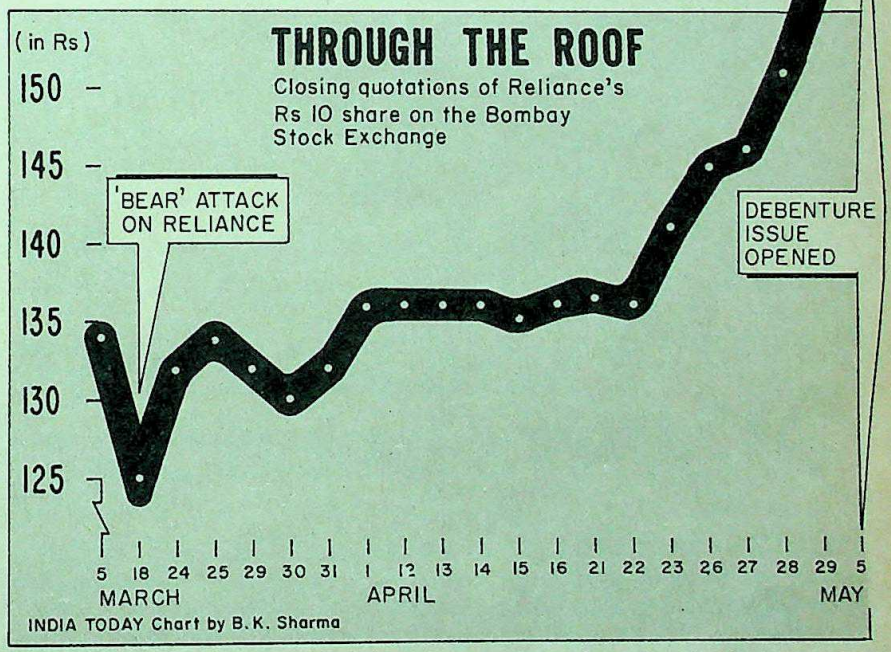
Foiled: But things did not go quite s, or sellers, had expected. From one buyer acting through thinly hominees mopped up every share sale. Unmasking a determined p the Reliance price line from rubhai Ambani's brokers, Pankaj d Harkisondas Laxmidas, bought eliance share in sight. The result dy spiral in which the already d Reliance stock rose sharply to ts. From roughly Rs 125 for a Rs st March, the market price of the -blue chip shot up through April , and last fortnight touched the of height of Rs 185, even touching e day in Ahmedabad.

he real crisis lay not in the soaring Reliance stock but in the manipulations which caused them. In an obvious attempt to teach the bear syndicate a lesson for hitting at the company's share prices, Ambani's cohorts decided last month to deliver the *coup de grace*. Twice each month, on a Friday, the Bombay stock exchange clears all transactions which have taken place in the preceding fortnight. Sellers deliver shares to buyers, buyers accept delivery, or either party asks for the transaction to be postponed to the next clearance day after paying a *badla* or delay charge to compensate the other for the hold-up. Knowing that the sellers would not have the shares to offer for delivery since they had indulged in massive short selling, Ambani's brokers refused any postponements except at a staggering Rs 50 per share (involving the paying out of Rs 5.50 crore). This was obviously a penal rate meant to teach the bears a lesson, since *badla* charges rarely cross into double digits.

Day Of Chaos: Friday, April 30, was a day of total chaos on the stock market. Ambani's supporters, styling themselves as a "Friends of Reliance Association", had bought 8.57 lakh of the 11 lakh shares sold in the previous two-month spree, and were in a position to dictate orders. Said a Reliance trader: "We are not going to allow these people to hammer down the prices of our shares just so that they can make a profit. We will protect ourselves at any cost."

Caught with their pants down, panic-stricken bears promptly began bidding for any Reliance shares that were available in an attempt at fulfilling their sale commitments. In the bedlam that followed, the stock exchange had to be shut down for three days while the exchange authorities tried to bring about a compromise between the unyielding bull and the bears.

Once it became clear that no understanding would be reached, the panic buying began in earnest. Aware that Ambani's men would extract their pound of flesh, the bears began a hunt for every available share, including those with financial institutions like the Life Insurance Corporation and the Industrial Development Bank of India. Stock markets across the country were swept clean of Reliance shares as the prices skyrocketed. By May 10, the gap between sales and availability was almost covered. But Ambani's men had made their point: Play with Reliance shares and you play with fire.



WITH the crisis averted for the time being, share market analysts in Bombay were going back to first causes. Although the Reliance debacle came to a head only last fortnight, it began on March 18 when a hysteria of selling hit the Bombay stock exchange. In 25 minutes of panic, starting at 1.35 p.m., bear operators in the market took prices of blue chip securities like Century and Tata Steel down by over 10 per cent. Three and a half lakh Reliance shares were sold during this period,

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1912. A 'first' from Tata Steel. The 8-hour day was introduced when the concept was unknown in Europe and America.

First and last–it's always been our people.

When the steel plant came up, labour welfare was 'one of the first cares' of the employer. While the world's foremost steel consultants were designing the steel plant, eminent social scientists Sydney & Beatrice Webb were writing a memorandum on 'Medical Services in the Welfare Work at Sakchi'.

This concern reflected the humane attitude of the Founder. For Jamsetji Tata firmly believed that looking after the health and welfare of employees meant laying the sure foundation of industrial harmony.

Anticipating every need of the Tata Steel man, the Company introduced the 8-hour day (1912), Free Medical Aid (1915), Leave with Pay (1920), Worker's Provident Fund (1920), Accident Compensation (1920) and Retiring Gratuity (1937). Most of these were introduced for the first time in India by Tata Steel, many, many years before they were contemplated in the West and enforced by law in this country.

And all through, the employee has responded in equal measure. Giving his all through the good years and the bad. Making sure of maximum plant output even in the worst periods of shortages of essentials.

It is this sense of belonging, this fierce pride in the Tata name, that has fostered over fifty years of industrial harmony in the Company—a unique record. This is as the Founder meant it to be. For Jamsetji Tata believed that the wealth generated by industry must benefit the people and, thus, enrich the nation.

75 TATA STEEL 1907-1982

TATA STEEL

What benefits the people, benefits the nation.

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own the scrip's price from Rs 131
Ambani's men stepped in, collared
e in sight, and pushed the price to
efore the day was out. Since then,
kept up a steady battering at the
entlessly pushing Reliance prices

ough it is technically illegal for an
er of a Monopolies and
Trade Practices (MRTP)-listed
like Reliance to trade in its own
is rule is neither followed nor
forced. Virtually every company
ublic issue of shares or debentures
the prices of its shares immediately
issue by making clandestine pur-
the market. Stock market bears,
his, invariably sell short just before
nd deliver after the issue, when
relative slump due to curtailed
the company or its nominees.
50 crore Reliance debenture issue
the corner—the issue closes on
it is argued that Ambani's cohorts
oice but to defend the share price
s moved in for what they thought
a killing.
tock market insiders disagree. Said
alal, a leading stock broker in the
ve the greatest regard for Ambani

Ambani: financial wizardry

as an industrialist. But it is absolutely unethical for him to manipulate the prices of his shares. If he is confident that his company is sound, then he should allow the shares to find their own level."

Unhealthy Trend: Dalal, who is on the governing board of the stock exchange, adds: "Ambani has been playing on the stock exchange for almost three years now, and this is a very unhealthy trend. When a company agent starts manipulating his own shares, what protection can there be for the ordinary shareholder?"

But even many of Ambani's detractors agree that there was little choice in the face of a concerted effort to beat down Reliance prices. For Ambani, who floats a debenture issue every year to finance his phenomenal growth, a downward trend in share prices could be fatal. Today, however, his share is priced so high that it has become a prime target for get-rich-quick speculators.

Reliance's true value, according to one estimate, should be only two-thirds of the prevailing market price, and this makes it easy prey for bear operators who want to make a killing by pushing its price down. Only effective counter-measures have kept the share from slumping—a fact which, considering the losses that bears have suffered in this round, should keep the scrip safe from speculators for some time to come.

—CHANDER UDAY SINGH

t last...relief from traffic jams in busy Sealdah area

Another step towards a better Calcutta

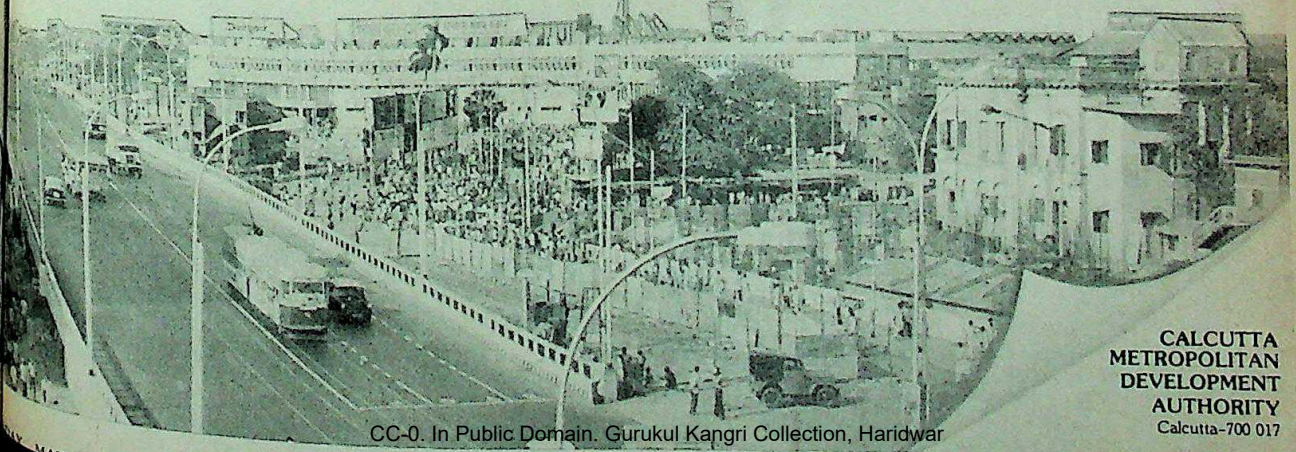
Commissioned on 31st March, 1982, the Sealdah Flyover in Calcutta is fulfilling its purpose by allowing smooth flow of thousands of vehicles from one end to another and hundreds of thousands of pedestrians from one side of the road to the other without crossing swords and each others' roads. No more waiting, no more sweating. No more hustle, no more bustle. All quick and quiet on the Sealdah front.

Now, vehicular traffic cross the busy Sealdah area in minutes rather than hours. Pedestrians cross the road safely (and catch their trains). The long-suffering Calcuttan, accustomed to nightmarish traffic jams, now heaves a sigh of relief. (When the adjacent subways are ready, there may be two sighs of relief!)

Calcutta is changing — visually, physically, functionally.

The Sealdah Flyover, completed much ahead of schedule, adds a new dimension to the changing city scape. It has demonstrated once again that a project can be implemented quickly, and perhaps properly, if there is public support and cooperation.

Calcutta, which has survived the agonies and frustrations of the past, now looks forward to an optimistic future. And that future, at least a glimpse of it, is here and now.



CALCUTTA METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Calcutta-700 017

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SODA ASH

A Chaotic Crunch

LARGE-SCALE dumping of soda ash by East European giants has sent the domestic manufacturers into a tail-spin. With Bulgaria exporting to India at barely 40 per cent of its production cost, local producers' stockyards were full to overflowing at the end of last month. And over one lakh tonnes of what is commonly referred to as washing soda lay exposed to the elements. Any delay in clearance would mean Rs 20 crore of production being washed away by the June rains.

It was a situation that called for crisis measures. And Tata Chemicals, who control roughly 55 per cent of the country's soda ash market, didn't believe in half measures. Prices were slashed in late April by Rs 350 per tonne to less than Rs 1,700 per tonne, and large advertisements in the newspapers notifying the price cut launched a stock clearance drive.

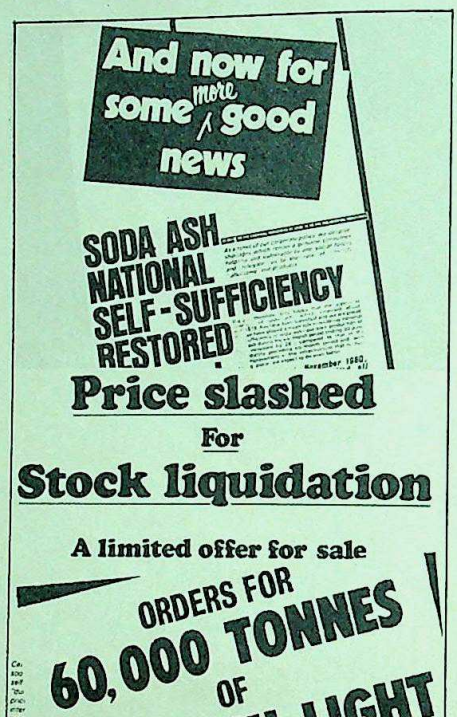
The results were dramatic: in 10 days Tata Chemicals was able to get rid of 60,000 tonnes of soda ash light, leaving just 10,000 tonnes to be disposed of later. And the horrendous threat posed by the monsoons had disappeared over the horizon.

But as imports continue to pour in the basic problem remains. In February, Tata Chemicals had been forced to cut monthly production by a third, to 24,000 tonnes, but the bottom had already dropped out of the market.

Real Culprit: The villain of the piece is the official import policy, which allows soda ash to be brought into the country under the Open General Licence (OGL) by any bona fide user in the glass and chemicals industries, or even by merchant suppliers for distribution to washermen and domestic households.

Import commitments have already totalled up to 63,000 tonnes. Indeed they could be much more, according to Tata Chemicals Managing Director Darbari Seth, since there is no effective way of keeping a tab on OGL imports. These imports have come when production is currently projected at a peak of 763,000 tonnes. Add to these the extant stocks which stood at 130,000 tonnes in January 1982, and total availability becomes 956,000 tonnes, well in excess of the projected demand of 720,000 tonnes. These figures spell out the crisis in all its starkness.

But the real crunch has come because of the price at which Bulgaria has been selling soda ash. At $55 (Rs 495) per tonne, the Bulgarians are clearly resorting to dumping, as becomes evident from a look at the prices of other suppliers. Last month, West European soda ash sold at an ex-factory price of about $170 (Rs 1,530) per tonne, British at $182 (Rs 1,638), Japanese at roughly $250 (Rs 2,250), and American soda ash (which is mined directly, without complex chemical operations) at $123 (Rs 1,107).



Tata's ads: crisis measures

Preventive Measures: The European Economic Community (EEC) has already slapped an anti-dumping duty on imports from Bulgaria. However the Government of India is so far unmoved, or so say the domestic producers, who also point out that the Japanese themselves had placed an unofficial ban on American soda ash early this year.

Today's glut stands in sharp contrast to the acute scarcity of soda ash that prevailed a couple of years ago. It was then that the Government had first encouraged imports, by slashing customs duty from 75 per cent to 35 per cent. But the Bulgarians had had it their way even then. Exploiting the scarcity, they had priced their soda ash at nothing less than $250 (Rs 2,250) per tonne, up sharply from the earlier supplies at $76 (Rs 684).

The domestic producers too had laughed their way to the bank then by selling prices to the maximum the could bear. And a controversy had with soda ash users accusing them fiteering and even pegging productio in order to exploit the scarcity.

Late Action: But whether sca plenty, the Government has always ded belatedly to changing situations back as May 1978, Tata Chemicals c J.R.D. Tata had warned the Gover an impending shortage and appr imports. But, complained Tata a shareholders' meeting of his com December, the Government sat tig acute scarcity had developed. So imports were encouraged, the domes had looked up as production incre levels that matched demand. But th have continued. The result is th chaos in the soda ash market.

If a Tata Chemicals spokesma believed, the cheap imports do not e the virtue of reaching the consume prices. "We have done a random sam purchase prices which we authenti the Government," said he, "and w that retail prices of imported soda a the region of Rs 3,500 to Rs 4,000 p This is much more than what we cha is pure exploitation."

Tata summed up the situation told his shareholders: "We have m veral representations to the Gov urging that... it must take effec urgent steps to curb the present unjustified imports which, apart fro expenditure of foreign exchange w country can ill afford, and loss of re the exchequer, cause grievous dama indigenous industry of vital impor the national economy. Effective go action in this behalf is now long o

—CHANDER UDA

THE MARKETS

Uncertainty

THE MARKETS have suddenly loped cold feet. They have r ed but with the exception o special scrips like Tata Steel, Cen ning and Reliance most shares are to the year's bottom. The summer is a trying time in India and the hol the markets too. With power shut they have begun in right earnest cutta—and load-shedding, perfor not always at its peak; but apart fro funny goings-on on Dalal Street, apparently affected the market th the virtual refusal by the powers to pay attention to industry's plea credit. In Bombay, it is said, in slowly grinding to a halt, and if this

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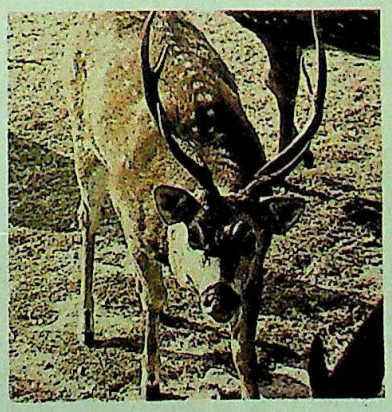

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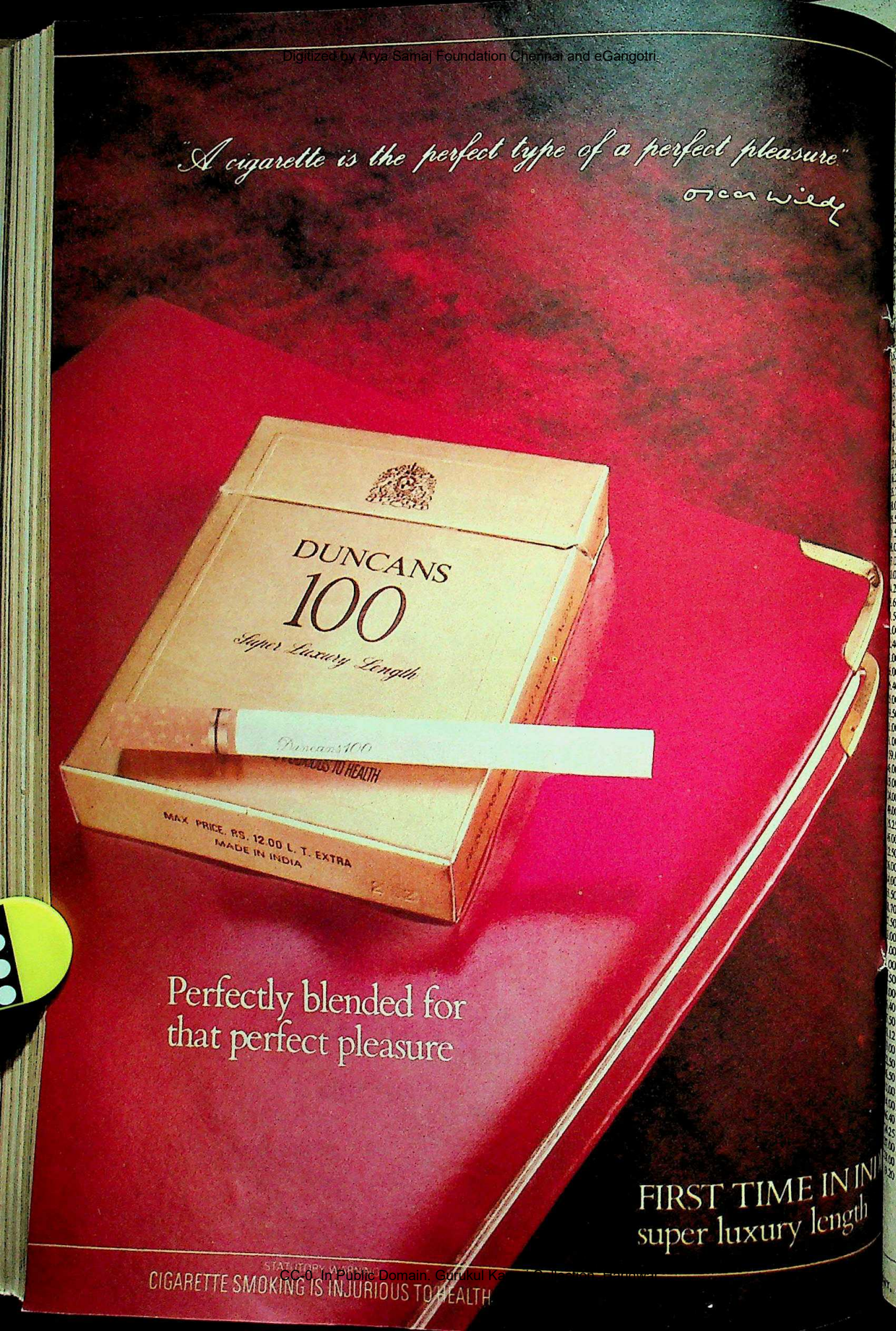

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ACTIVE STOCKS

		Close 4.5.82	Change on Fort-night
1.25	Ambalal Sarabhai	12.00	– 2.75
1.50	Ashok Leyland	47.50	– 2.00
1.50	Associated Cement	286.00	– 4.00
1.00	Atlas Copco	64.00	3.00
5.00	Bajaj Auto	1450.00	65.00
1.70	Ballarpur	39.70	– 1.10
2.00	Baroda Rayon	363.00	– 36.50
1.00	Bharat Gears	34.50	– 0.50
1.80	Birla Jute	30.00	– 1.50
1.00	Blow Plast	59.50	nil
1.50	Bombay Dyeing	69.50	– 2.00
1.20	Brooke Bond	21.75	0.45
1.40	Calcutta Electric	15.40	– 0.40
0.00	Century Spinning	987.00	10.00
6.55	Chemicals & Fibres	19.55	– 2.45
5.00	Colgate	97.00	– 63.00
1.60	Crescent Dyes	12.60	– 1.00
4.50	Delhi Cloth Mills	35.56	– 0.75
1.80	Dunlop	18.80	– 1.05
1.50	East India Hotels	17.87	– 0.63
2.00	Elecon	32.50	0.50
1.25	Escorts	36.50	– 4.50
3.75	Food Specialities	41.00	1.50
1.00	Garware Nylon	46.75	1.50
1.50	General Electric	25.50	– 0.80
2.50	Guest Keen Williams	31.50	– 1.30
4.00	Gujarat Fertilisers	409.00	– 4.00
7.00	Hindustan Aluminium	43.60	– 0.65
1.00	Hindustan Lever	50.50	– 1.74
1.25	Hoechst Dyes	24.25	– 0.75
1.60	Indian Aluminium	18.60	– 0.40
1.50	Indian Cable	20.00	0.40
1.00	Indian Dyestuff	205.00	4.00
1.40	Indian Explosives	22.40	– 0.50
1.00	Indian Hotels	62.00	nil
1.00	Indian Organic	30.00	3.50
1.40	Indian Oxygen	26.40	– 7.70
1.00	Ingersoll-Rand	138.00	5.00
1.50	Ion Exchange	32.50	– 0.50
1.00	ITC	26.00	2.40
1.00	Jayshree Tea	31.00	– 3.90
9.00	J.K. Synthetics	64.80	– 3.00
4.00	Kesoram	50.40	– 2.70
3.00	Kinetic Engineering	126.00	7.00
4.00	Kothari (Madras)	24.00	– 1.00
4.00	Larsen & Toubro	51.50	1.25
3.25	Madura Coats	15.50	0.25
6.00	Mahindra & Mahindra	46.00	– 1.00
2.50	Metal Box	12.50	– 0.40
3.00	Mukand Iron	28.00	– 1.00
4.00	National Organic	195.00	5.00
1.50	Nirlon	36.75	0.75
0.70	Orient Paper	38.70	– 0.30
1.50	Peico Electronics	27.00	– 1.50
3.00	Ponds India	70.50	1.50
4.00	Premier Auto	332.00	– 10.00
2.00	Ranbaxy	25.25	– 1.25
1.50	Raymond	53.25	– 1.00
3.00	Reliance	158.00	22.00
1.40	Shaw Wallace	29.00	2.00
1.50	Siemens India	59.00	– 1.00
1.12	Shriram Fibres	47.44	1.19
1.00	SPIC	14.62	0.12
2.50	Sylvania & Laxman	22.50	– 2.00
4.50	Tata Chemicals	45.75	– 0.25
1.00	Tata Steel	387.00	8.00
4.00	Tata Engineering	483.00	– 7.00
0.40	Texmaco	49.50	– 0.50
4.25	Union Carbide	24.40	– 0.40
2.00	Usha Martin Black	27.10	– 1.05
7.00	Voltas	228.00	– 2.00
0.20	Zuari Agro	21.00	nil

continues any longer the fat may be in the fire.

Is someone painting too scary a picture? Actually—whatever the critics might say—the economy is in a reasonably good condition over the long haul. Intrinsically, therefore, the corporate sector should be on a good wicket—in fact, most company reports including those of such giants as Ashok Leyland and Guest Keen Williams have come out with excellent reports. But over the shorter haul, things may not be as rosy.

Precariously Poised: There is a large element of marginality in the Indian economy, particularly in the industrial sector: a slight squeeze here and the entire tractor industry is put out of gear; a less than normal harvest and prices start zooming. The credit squeeze has at last begun to bite into the market and the net result is that engineering units are the first to feel the crunch. Steel and cement may be the next to follow, particularly since vast quantities of cement and steel have reportedly been imported. Free cement prices are already coming down and share prices will go down with them.

On the political front there is room for anxiety. If the mini-general election goes against the ruling party, the political fall-out might be more than the party can take in its stride. Like Oscar Wilde who could resist anything but temptation, the stock markets can withstand anything but uncertainty—and political uncertainty is the worst kind there is. Most operators are therefore keeping their fingers crossed

Falling Market: According to the usual grapevine in the Finance Ministry, the credit squeeze might continue as long as August or September by which time the better part of the monsoon season would be over. It is really doubtful whether the markets can stand such a long strain. The current nose-dive might therefore continue headlong, with the bears in full chase and the bulls in full retreat. The bears haven't had their say for a long time and are determined to chase the bulls out of the ring. They have nearly done so in Bombay where the stock market has been so preoccupied with its own internal wrangles that trading virtually stopped for days on end.

It might not be a bad thing for investors to call it a day or, at best, to book profits by disposing of certain scrips that are obviously stretched. The trouble is that quite a few companies are still announcing bonus shares as well as convertible debentures tied to equity. J.K. Synthetics, for instance, has announced a bonus share—very much below market expectations, though—and is likely to come up with a debenture issue. Mahindra and Mahindra might also do the same. And all these are blue chips—and whoever sold blue chips on a falling market?

WORLD VALUE OF RUPEE

Country	Currency and Unit		TT Selling Rates(Rs)	TT Buying Rates(Rs)
Australia	As $	1	9.9248	9.8253
Austria	As Sch	100	57.6452	57.0302
Bahrain	Dinar	1	24.6583	24.4048
Bangladesh	Taka	100	43.5602	43.2404
Canada	Can $	1	7.6032	7.5221
Egypt	Egp £	1	11.3823	11.2988
France	Fr Frc	1	1.5552	1.5370
Hong Kong	HK $	1	1.6102	1.5940
Indonesia	Rupiah	100	1.4512	1.4405
Iran	Rial	100	11.6080	11.5036
Italy	It Lira	100	0.7286	0.7207
Japan	Jap Yen	100	3.9941	3.9454
Kenya	K Shilling	1	0.8943	0.8863
Kuwait	Dinar	1	32.6042	32.2616
Malaysia	Ml $	1	4.0774	4.0351
Mauritius	Rupee	1	0.8758	0.8694
Nepal	Rupee	1	0.7178	0.7126
Netherlands	D Glds	1	3.6497	3.6076
Pakistan	Rupee	1	0.8267	0.7997
Singapore	Sing $	1	4.4710	4.4178
Spain	Sp Pt	100	9.0872	8.9867
Sri Lanka	Rupee	1	0.4568	0.4466
Sweden	Sw Kr	1	1.6217	1.6042
Switzerland	Sw Frc	1	4.9173	4.8604
Tanzania	T Sch	1	1.0087	1.0013
Thailand	Baht	100	40.7396	40.3735
UK	Pound	1	16.9477	16.7954
USA	US $	1	9.3575	9.2250
UAE	Dihram	1	2.5885	2.5695
USSR	Rouble	1	12.8086	12.7344
W Germany	DM	1	4.0569	4.0127

These rates were supplied by The Bank of Tokyo, Ltd., New Delhi and quoted between the Banks on May 8, 1982.

ECONOMIC TRENDS

	Latest	Change on month
PRICES		
ET Commodities Price Index, May 4 (1969–70 = 100)	236.0	– 3.6
Cereals	227.2	– 6.1
Chemicals	278.8	0.1
Cotton	195.6	2.2
Industrial Fibres	165.6	1.3
Sugar	229.6	– 6.1
Textile Yarn	219.1	– 1.7
Vegetable Oils	265.0	– 3.4
Gold, standard, May 4 (Rs per 10gm)	1,725.00	– 30.00
Silver, May 4 (Rs per kg)	2,697.00	17.00
SHARES		
ET Share Price Index, May 4 (1969-70 = 100)	230.3	– 19.5
Cement	135.4	– 11.1
Chemicals	180.6	– 12.2
Engineering	372.9	– 36.6
Fertilisers	186.4	– 12.4
Man-made Fibres	476.0	– 12.0
Paper	444.9	– 43.3
Rubber Goods	141.7	– 21.0
MONEY		(per cent)
Money Supply, April 2		1.0
Bank Deposits		2.0
Foreign Exchange Assets		8.0

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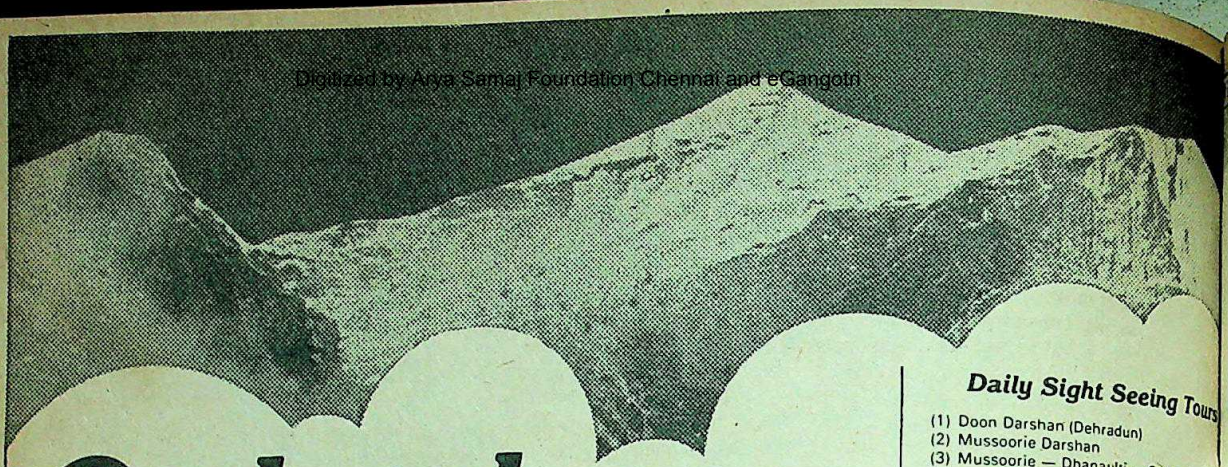

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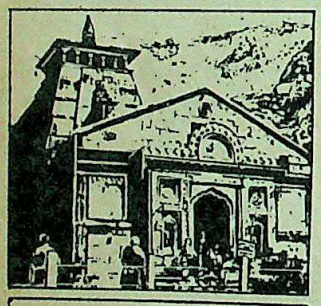

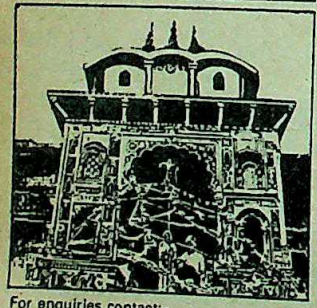

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• Rishikesh-Badrinath	Mon, Sun	4 days	330/-	270/-
• Rishikesh Yamunotri Gangotri	Fri, Sat	7 days	425/-	360/-
• Rishikesh Kedarnath-Badrinath Gangotri-Yamunotri	Tuesday	14 days	750/-	640/-
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- **General Manager (Tourism)**, Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam Ltd., 74/1, Rajpur Road, Dehradun. Phone : 26817.
- **Trishul Travels**, Shivaji Market, Dehradun Road, Rishikesh.
- **Ashwani Travels**, Station Road, Haridwar. Phone : 125.
  Also U.P. Tourist Office at 36, Janpath, Chandralok Bhawan, New Delhi - Phone : 322251.
- **The Regional Manager (Transport)** I.T.D.C. Akbar Hotel, New Delhi. Phones : 370251/392.
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6. Delhi—Dogalbhitta—Chopta
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Gaumukh – Tapoban—Nandanban (May to Nov.)
Kauri Pass (June to Oct.)
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OPEC TUMBLES FROM THE TOP

FOR THE first time in 20 years, OPEC (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) has lost its rank as the non-communist world's major oil producer. OPEC's daily production for the January-March period averaged 20.3 million barrels while the rest of the non-communist world produced 21.6 million barrels. Total world output was down 8 per cent from a year earlier to 56 million barrels a day including 14.2 million barrels for the communist countries. The Soviet Union, with an output of 11.8 million barrels a day, continues to be the world's largest producer of oil. The sharp fall in the OPEC oil output is ascribed to the current recession in industry throughout the world as well as a massive shift to other energy sources.

G TANTRUMS

TRADE war is hotting up. For the first time, the European mmunity (EC) is pressing charges against Japan's entire ontrol system under Article 23 of the General Agreement s and Trade (GATT). After months of futile bilateral talks, rned to GATT to persuade Japan to open up its domestic r face the consequences. The charges, filed in mid-April, e West closer than ever before to the possibility of trade ation with Asia's leading industrial power. Last year, EC ran a trade deficit of nearly Rs 12,000 crore with Japan, ly to the US's own deficit of Rs 14,000 crore. EC is critical ctive Japanese business methods which keep out rs.

N CLOSES SHOP

e end of the line for Shildon, the small village in England hich George Stephenson's first locomotive set off in 1825 oric journey to Darlington. British Railways announced the closure of its locomotive and wagon-making works at the world's first railway town. It was on September 27, t 700 people, watched by many more, scrambled into open or a hair-raising ride to Stockton at a speed of 12 miles per r more than a hundred years, Shildon works has con- on wagon manufacture and maintenance, but there are rders and British Railways has decided to close shop.

M OF THE OIL GLUT

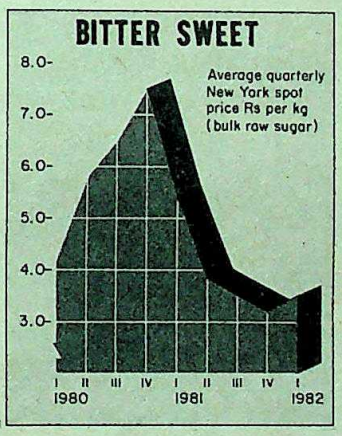
T with shrinking revenues due to the world oil glut, wait, the richest country in the world in terms of per capita has announced its first budget deficit since the 1973 oil he deficit is $1.1 billion in a total expenditure of $12.3 his year's budget is 5 per cent higher than last year's which rplus of more than $ 6 billion. Kuwait is currently about 650,000 barrels of crude a day, the lowest in its d about 50 per cent of the official ceiling of 1.25 million mance Minister Abdel-Latif al-Hamad has said that the ight go 'bankrupt' in four years if public expenditure l at the current high rate with no rise in oil revenues.

S IRKSOME PARTNER

A faces so many difficulties in buying non-military high- ology goods from the United States that it has decided to apan and Europe for its pressing needs. China is keen to e its plants and technology but US industry is apparently its feet on collaboration, pending crucial policy decisions by Beijing on imports of foreign capital and technology. China is interested in high-technology machine tools, instrumentation, micro-processors and electronic parts and will now try and obtain them from Japan and Europe.

CURBING HONG KONG'S EXPORTS

THE EUROPEAN Community (EC) has asked for a 10 per cent cut in quotas and a reduction in flexibility provisions for exports from Hong Kong to Europe. The 10 per cent quota reduction could be introduced either through a straight reduction by that amount over the 4-year term of the agreement or through a gradual reduction that would begin at a higher level and ease off, averaging 10 per cent level during the same period. Knitted shirts, woven-knitted blouses and men's woven shirts are described as 'sensitive' categories whose exports would be virtually pegged at old levels.



SUGAR SLUMP

THE PRICE of sugar in international markets has been plummeting for more than a year and is now about half of what it was a year ago. Sugar prices are likely to remain weak as world-wide production in the current year is expected to rise to 96.5 million tonnes, some 5 million tonnes higher than likely consumption. But US prices may not decline further as the duty and fees on sugar imports have been more than doubled since December, effectively curbing the price slide. Since December, the New York spot price of bulk raw sugar has increased slightly from about 16 US cents a pound (about Rs 3 per kg) to 18 US cents (Rs 3.30 per kg).

ANGLING FOR HERTZ

FIRESTONE Tyre and Rubber Co which wants to cut its dependence on tyres is trying to acquire RCA Corporation's ailing subsidiary, Hertz. Troubled RCA wants to sell Hertz—which leases cars, trucks and equipment—to reduce its debt of $1.6 billion of which 50 per cent is accounted for by Hertz. Firestone has been selling off its tyre plants in the US as well as elsewhere (including India where its Bombay-based operations have been acquired by Modis) and wants to reduce its tyre business from the current 85 per cent of its turnover to nearer 75 per cent. Hertz has just launched a campaign to make itself a national leader in automotive maintenance and repair on the strength of its 1,400 company-owned stores.

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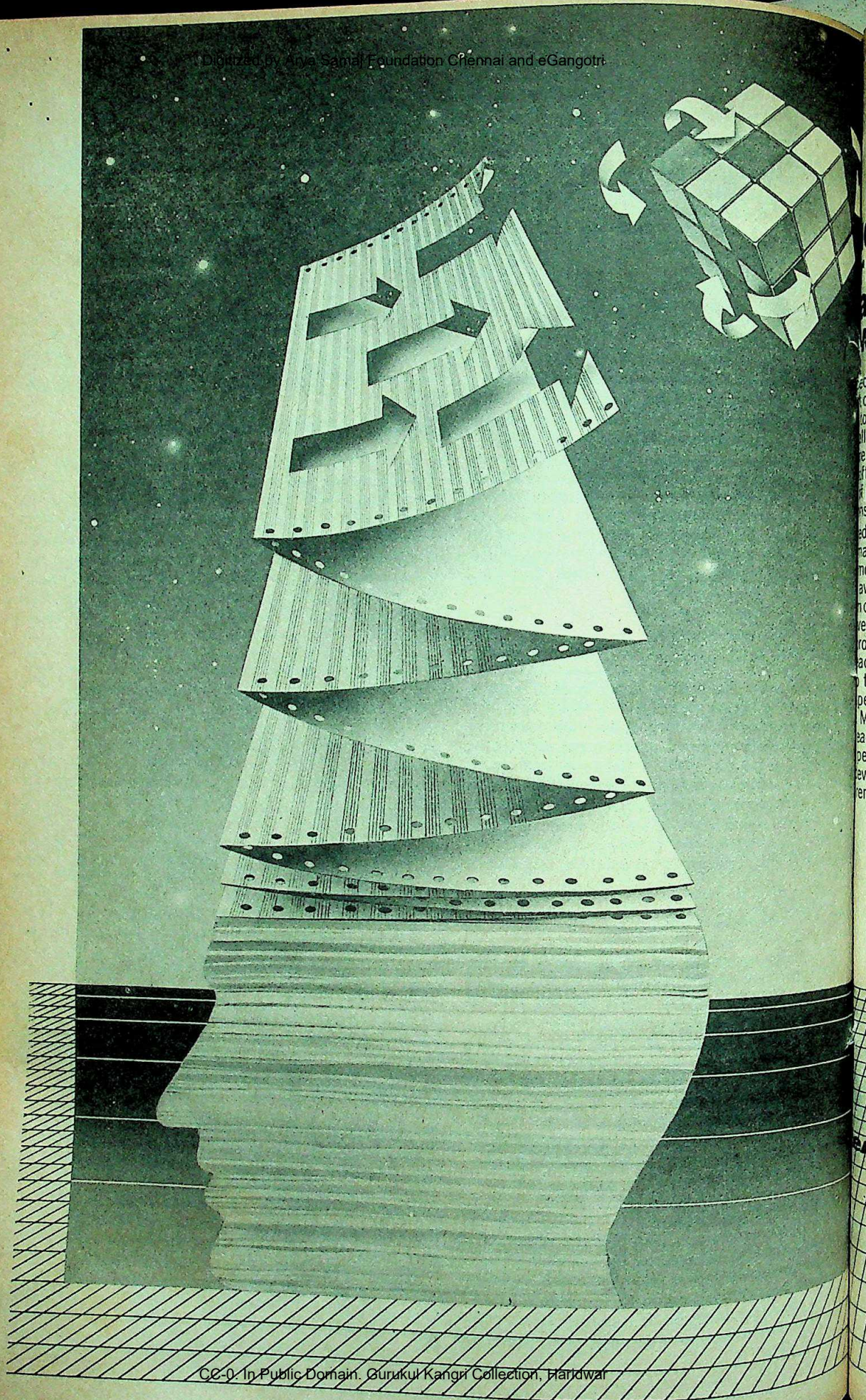

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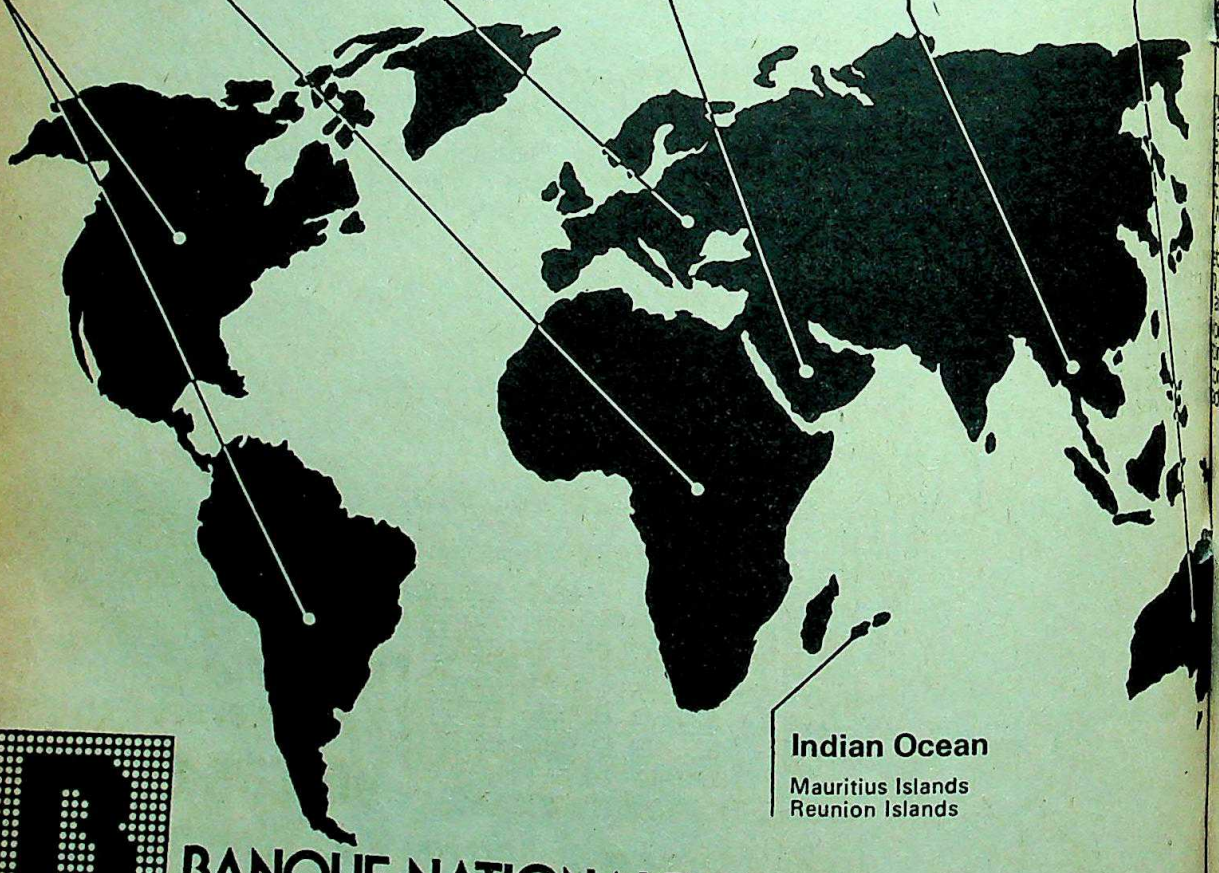

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MRS GANDHI

No-show Diplomacy

IN SHEER clumsiness it had few parallels in the annals of Indian diplomacy. Moreover, it was utterly uncharacteristic of a prime minister whose forte is said to be a sharp, unfailing sense of timing in politics. Summit diplomacy is not conducted in a state of absent-mindedness. An appointment at the summit, except when grave and sombre issues of war and peace are at stake, is not casually broken.

Yet this is what Mrs Gandhi did in April. At Delhi airport, minutes before taking off for Saudi Arabia, she broke the news that took everyone by surprise. She would be making her long-awaited trip to Moscow in June, she told reporters, and would be visiting Ronald Reagan at the White House in Washington in early July. Less than a fortnight later, on April 28, it was announced that both visits had been postponed, only to be rescheduled later.

Explanations transmitted by official 'spokesmen' hardly carried conviction. Surely the prime minister knew very well when she decided to go to Washington in early July that the new President of the Indian republic would have to be elected on July 24! And if the reason for the postponement was that her staff had not made adequate preparations, it was even worse: a clear admission that the technology of foreign policy decision-making is weak, flabby and unintegrated.

The bleak situation was not redeemed by the diplomatic reporting in the press that followed. Mrs Gandhi, it transpired, had sought a fresh appointment for late July. Each day's delay in a positive response from the Oval Office was a blow at India's standing as an important member of the international community.

Limitations: An obliging corps of diplomatic reporters were mobilised to counsel Ronald Reagan that he would be committing another foreign policy folly of the first water if he failed to find time for India's prime minister in the last ten days of July. Why July? Because August is the holiday month in America, and in September, Reagan will get busy with his summit with Leonid Brezhnev. In other words, if Mrs Gandhi and Reagan cannot meet in July, they will probably not meet this year.

But why was the visit fixed for early July put off? Because Reagan had invited General Zia-ul-Haq of Pakistan to visit him *before* he saw Mrs Gandhi? Was the idea of going to Washington on the heels of Pakistan's martial law-wielding President galling to the prime minister? Mrs Gandhi wants to visit Reagan as prime minister of South Asia's leading power, as leader of one-seventh of mankind, of an emergent middle power whose weight in the affairs of the planet is not negligible. Reagan, however, has his own problem—which is one of his many foreign policy problems in 1982. He cannot allow Pakistan's military leader to feel that his Administration concedes to India a greater and more important role in regional and world affairs than to Pakistan.

Reagan's commitment to India-Pakistan parity is complete and final. It is not negotiable. His support to Britain against Argentina in Britain's last imperialist war in the blue waters of the world has cost him dearly in terms of America's relations with the Latin nations. Reagan has no surfeit of loyal allies: he cannot afford to damage America's already tarnished image as an unreliable patron. As long as Reagan is US President, India is basically a friend and an ally of the Soviet Union.

Diplomatic Moves: Mrs Gandhi has been trying for some time to live down the pro-Soviet image of India. She believed she had made a bold gesture of balanced relations with the two superpowers by linking her Moscow visit to the visit to Washington. D trip to Saudi Arabia she repeatedly highlighted India's with the Soviets on Afghanistan. In February last she told of the *US News and World Report* that India's relation Soviets were "never as close as Americans said" they

She might have taken too seriously the recent pronou of the American Ambassador to Pakistan, Ronald I. despite political disagreements, "we do not share the (India) is anyone's proxy", as also the advice rendered visiting Americans—politicians, academics, diplo businessmen—that the Reagan Administration's world mellowed, and that it was no longer as dogmatically na vision as it used to be in the first flush of the President romance with America's military might and global lea any case, the prime minister ignored what her own Amb Washington, K.R. Narayanan had made clear in several 1981: the Reagan Administration's commitment to t regime in Pakistan will be deeper with the passage of ti simple reason that Pakistan is the kingpin in Washingto strategic designs for the Persian Gulf region.

WHEN Narayanan was named ambassador to States, Mrs Gandhi told him in clear terms of improve India's relations with America. In months she has taken pains to make that wish increasi Soon after Reagan entered the Oval Office, Mrs Gandhi a special envoy to him in the person of B.K. Nehru s "wide-ranging dialogue" on bilateral and world issu visiting members of the Armed Services Committee of th Representatives of the US Congress, she earnestly plea new beginning" in Indo-US relations.

Sea Change: She had prepared to host a luncheon fo of State Alexander Haig during his scheduled visit to December, an honour she had denied Henry Kissinge (Haig cancelled his visit in view of the military cra Poland). Mrs Gandhi feigned to have been highly pleas 45-minute conclave with Reagan at Cancun when she w by her two principal foreign policy advisers, L.K. J Parthasarathy. In January last she sent Romesh Bhi retary in the External Affairs Ministry in charge of affairs, to Washington to do a little probing.

Reflecting her stance on Indo-US relations, Foreig Narasimha Rao would say nothing on this matter at meeting of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee ticence was in striking contrast with Rao's statement Sabha on March 20, 1981 that the "United States' att India had hardened". When in March last Mrs Gandhi group of American ambassadors in South Asia, reporte that these diplomats went back "fairly convinced that basis for the assumption that this country is anti-U Russian as generally imagined in Washington". The earlier, Mrs Gandhi had herself told a New York journa was "no conflict of interests" between India and the US distrust the United States. In fact, I am neither pro-U USSR nor against either of them. I am strongly pro-

Rebuffed: Her protestations have not broken the US relations. The Reagan Administration and the U have together killed the agreement under which India receive enriched nuclear fuel supplies for Tarapur

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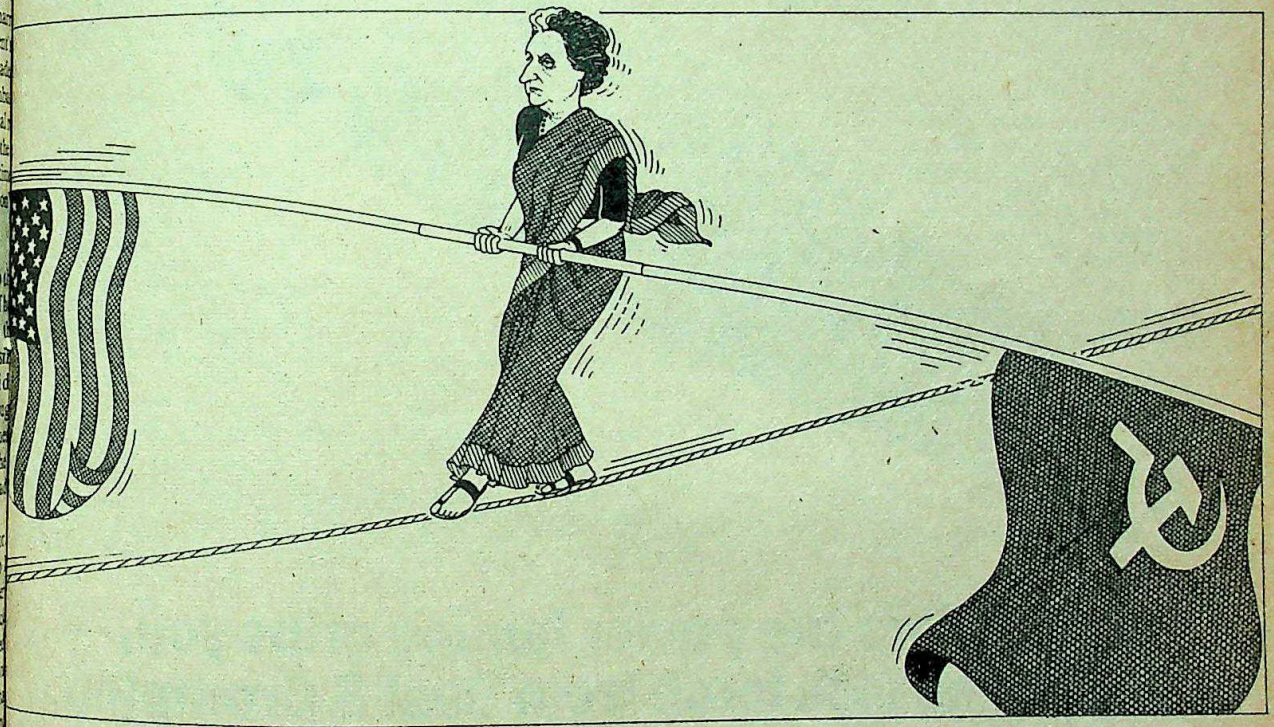
ey have left to India the task of giving the agreement a rial. The Reagan Administration has decided to sharply ncessional IDA aid to India, and has spared no effort to ird for India to get credits and aid from the World Bank International Monetary Fund.

-page glossy released by the Pentagon claims that there military advisers" in India—a country that is bracketed anistan, Syria, Libya, Iraq, Ethiopia, South Yemen and sically pro-Soviet. Even though the State Department the allegation, it was repeated in a report issued by the Chiefs of Staff on the United States' military posture for Administration granted travel facilities to Jagjit Singh the Khalistan protagonist, in spite of the Indian foreign protest that it constituted an "unfriendly action". And it eports of Indian textiles.

Conflicting Views: Despite a very consistent display of an of indifference—sometimes downright hostility—some Pakistan; the vagaries of the Reagan Administration's China policy; and the US attempts to curtail India's share of international developmental assistance." What, then, remains of a "bilateral" relationship? Can bilateral relations grow on a totally splintered foundation of political and strategic interests?

The trouble with Mrs Gandhi's US policy is that it is not anchored on an objective understanding of Reaganism and what it stands for at home and in the world. She is caught between the horns of a dilemma. One horn is the thinking, like *Indian Express* Editor S. Nihal Singh's, that "India needs the United States more than the United States needs India." The other is the thinking, like *Times of India* Editor Girilal Jain's, that India is big enough, strong enough to stick to its own postures and wait for the rest of the world to come round.

Alternatives: Between the two there is a third line she could pursue with the United States as long as Reagan is in the White House, that is, for two more years: patiently wait for Reaganism to



ve indulged in the fantasy that there is no basic 'bilateral' etween India and the Reagan Administration; this facile has sometimes been encouraged by Mrs Gandhi herself. confuses even competent journalists is written large on es of our newspapers. To cite only one example: On 1981 *The Hindu* reported: "Indo-American relations are another phase of acute disenchantment and disillusion- elling the earlier hopes of a marked improvement, since untries are now cast in the unenviable roles of viewing the of peace and security in South Asia from diametrically directions."

r later, on May 6, 1982, a front page report in *The Hindu* ough Indo-American relations continue to be strained by ing perceptions of many international problems, there ous bilateral conflicts other than the Tarapur question to e relations. The main points of friction at present are: -going relationship with the Soviet Union; its refusal to with the US in condemning the Soviet intervention in an; India's opposition to the American naval buildup in n Ocean and its strong disapproval of the rearming of fall apart on the domestic American front and in the world that does not run to Reagan's order. The United States is far greater, larger and broader than Reaganism which, it is now clear, is only a temporary backlash of neo-conservative thinking.

And there are other ways to make even Reagan take a step or two towards India. Not by downgrading the Soviet connection—which will be as big a mistake as taking the connection for granted in a period of uncertain change. But by building friendly relations with Pakistan and with the oil-rich states of the Persian Gulf. Pakistan, the US and India cannot have the same perception of a no-war or friendship treaty between Islamabad and New Delhi. The US and the USSR used détente for very different purposes; both gained for a while. India can take a dialectical view of détente with Pakistan, use it to build bridges to the Gulf and beyond. That will make both Washington and Moscow take a new look at India.

As long as Indo-Pakistan relations remain what they are, Mrs Gandhi will get almost nothing from Reagan even if the White House extends to her an invitation for a summit in late July. She will find it a cloudy summit, which neither Reagan's synthetic voice nor her charming smiles will be able to disperse.

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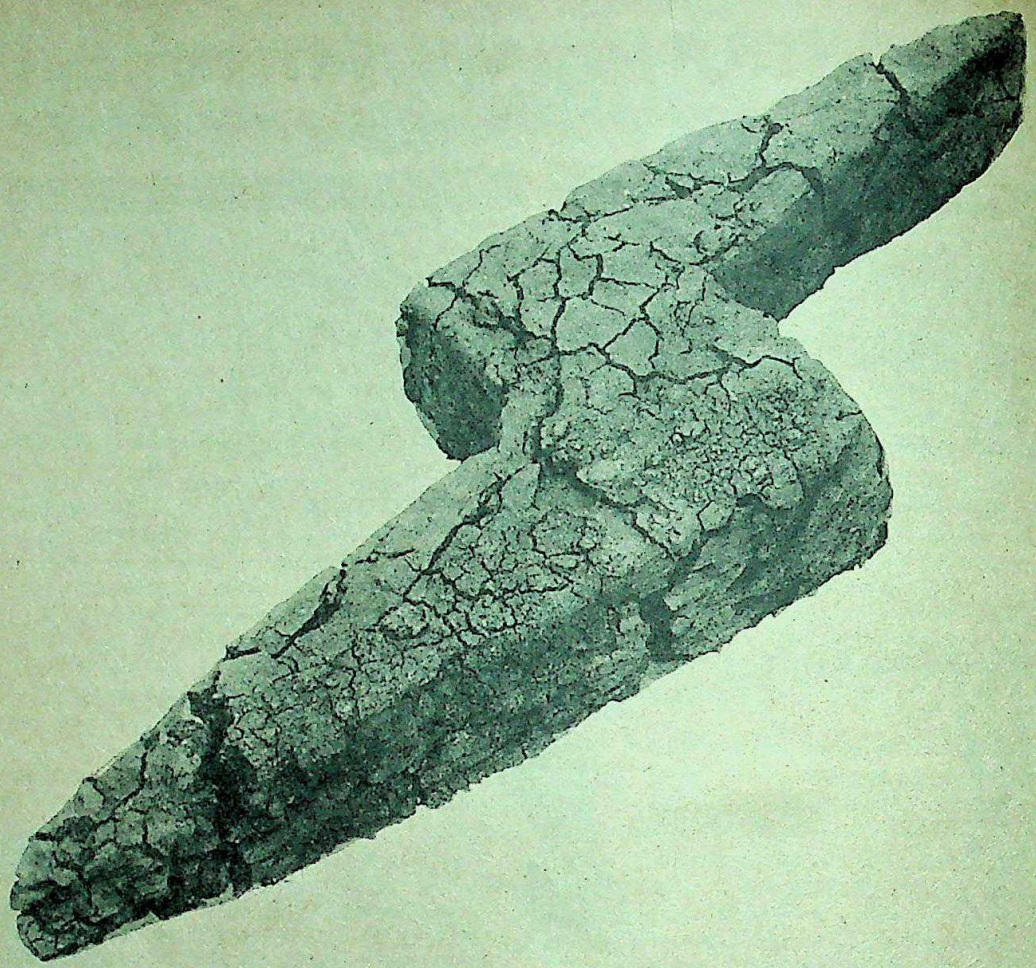

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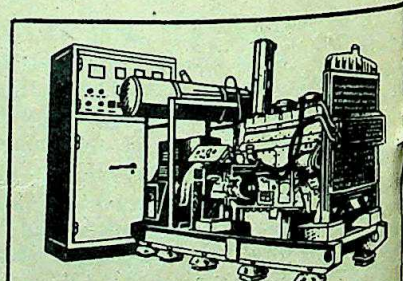

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Unrealistic pricing hits ug production and investment

Drug prices are under Government control for the past two decades. And since the last 10 years they are fixed according to a clearly defined, rigid pricing formula. Not only the prices of all bulk drugs but also the price and profit margins of each and every finished formulation are controlled. On top of this, there is a ceiling on the overall profit a company can make. This three-tier control ensures that no company can overcharge or make exorbitant profit or increase prices without the prior approval of the Government.

ntrol on cost

gh prices are controlled, there is no l on the costs of inputs which scalated sharply (see table). The control order provides for ic revision in drug prices on the basis eases in cost of production but s no adequate administrative nery to deal expeditiously undreds of price revision applications. y the time prices are revised, costs ncreased further, rendering the ed prices uneconomic.

COST ESCALATION OF INPUTS

	Unit	Price in 1976 (Rs.)	Price in 1981 (Rs.)	Percentage increase (%)
ials				
e	kg	7.15	14.75	106.29
e	kg	31.09	55.99	80.09
030	kg	2.15	7.49	248.37
c acid	kg	15.78	32.96	108.87
l	kg	8.86	18.54	109.26
panol)				
ng				
ials				
ml white	1000	107.07	204.24	90.75
bottle	1000	233.60	378.47	62.02
) 50 ml				
s	1000	140.40	185.76	32.31
5 g	1000	326.27	656.29	101.15
um foil	kg	45.73	69.55	52.09
d)				
es				
ity	KWPH	0.24	0.45	87.50
e oil	Litre	0.96	2.57	167.71

linate delay

inate delay in price revision is not the problem. What is even worse is that prices are finally approved they adequate and far below what ranted by the cost of production and the Government's own pricing s. This is because actual costs are not into account; several legitimate are arbitrarily disallowed.

ermore, the mark-up allowed is equate and unrealistic. Under the g formula the consumer price of a is arrived at by adding a percentage -up to its factory cost. Mark-up is not ; it is to cover costs not included ctory cost, such as freight, distribution charges, trade discount, selling expenses and manufacturers' margin.

Under the old formula mark-up was a maximum of 75% of factory cost for certain drugs and 150% for others. This has now been reduced to 40% for some drugs, 55% for a second category and 60%-100% for a third, although in no area have costs gone down. The break-even mark-up for most companies is around 75%. When costs are going up and prices all round are rising, drug prices cannot remain the same without adversely affecting investment, production and availability of drugs and medicines.

Sharp decline in profitability

The drug industry like any other industry, must have a fair return to enable it to pay a reasonable dividend and to plough back for new investment and increased production. But cost escalation without timely price adjustments has sharply eroded margins to levels well below those prescribed by the Government. The position today is that very few companies are able to get even a modest return. Obviously, there is something basically wrong with the policy itself.

The impact of cost escalation on the profitability is clearly demonstrated by a study of the balance sheets of 20 leading companies by the Economic Times Research Bureau. These 20 companies together account for a total drug sales of Rs.474 crores in 1980-81 or about 50% of the entire production of the organised sector of the industry. The study showed that although sales increased by 9.5% in 1980-81 over 1979-80, profit before tax dropped as much as 25.2%. Retained profits for the year recorded a sharp decline of 22.5%.

The financial viability of several companies has been severely hit. Some established units are already in the red; others are rapidly moving in that direction.

Shortage

Naturally, this has adversely affected investment and production. New investment has slowed down. Shortages of several essential medicines, which were occasional in the past, have now become frequent and wide-ranging. Other factors have aggravated the situation: scarcity of critical raw materials and packing materials; inadequate and irregular supply of canalised drugs; power cuts and labour unrest.

HOW DRUG PRICES COMPARE WITH OTHER PRICES

	Wholesale price index	
	All commodities	Drugs & medicines
1970-71 (base)	100.0	100.0
1975-76	172.9	118.7
1978-79	186.4	136.1
1979-80	212.3	135.2
1980-81	256.9	137.6

A policy for growth, not stagnation

The aim of the policy-makers was to encourage investment and production. But the policy has produced the opposite effect. Our Prime Minister has recently called for removal of all policy constraints and procedural handicaps that prevent optimum utilisation of the country's productive potential. But the drug policy does not encourage more production to prevent shortages.

Another look at the policy is long overdue. It is crippling a vital industry. It has caused shortages and hardships to the consumer. It has also pushed up the country's import bill.

In the year of productivity we need a drug policy that encourages growth, more production and greater availability of drugs and medicines to the consumer.

MARK-UP IS NOT PROFIT

Mark-up is meant to cover costs **not** included in factory cost: namely, freight, marketing and distribution costs, trade discount and manufacturers' margin. The mark-up which was 75% for some drugs and 150% for others in 1970 has been slashed to 40%, 55% and 60%-100% under the DPCO 1979, although in no area have costs come down.

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ANANDA MARGA

Dance Of Death

FOR AN organisation that preaches peace and pacifism, the Ananda Marga is notoriously violence-prone. But last fortnight's gruesome events involving the controversial, saffron-robed sect were hardly of its own making. On the morning of April 30, a group of Ananda Margis, including two women, en route to Global Jagriti, the towering, fortress-like headquarters of the sect in Calcutta, was stopped by an angry mob, dragged out of their taxis, brutally bludgeoned and then immolated in front of thousands of horrified witnesses. Mob frenzy is nothing new to Calcutta but the bloody killings were a malevolent manifestation of a new terrorism.

The spark that triggered the carnage was ostensibly attributed to intangible and unconfirmed rumours that the sect was indulging in child-lifting. But once the smoke from the charred bodies had cleared, it revealed instead a carefully-plotted and brutally-executed conspiracy that was nothing short of premeditated mass murder. As always happens, those responsible for the carnage returned to the shadows of anonymity, but every single clue points to a well-entrenched political grouping which used the Margis as unfortunate if convenient cannon-fodder.

The prelude to the mass killings were rumours that surfaced simultaneously in different parts of the city that the Margis were indulging in child-lifting. Later investigations revealed that not a single case of child-lifting had been reported to the police but once the rumours started they spread like wildfire and generated the requisite atmosphere of hair-trigger tension.

Waiting Mobs: The events that followed could hardly be considered spontaneous. The attacks on the Margis took place at three separate spots in the heart of Calcutta and started at the same time. The fact that the mobs were ready and waiting for the Margis with iron rods, stones and cans of kerosene speaks for itself. So does the fact that the conspirators knew that the Margis would be coming along those specific routes.

So far, there are two theories circulating in Calcutta. One is that the Marga massacre was orchestrated by opponents of the state Government, who also include the ruling party at the Centre, with a view to discrediting the Marxists on their home turf and creating doubts in the minds of the electorate —just before the May 19 elections—regarding the ability of the state Government to ensure law and order.

BIKASH DAS

Charred bodies of Ananda Margis in Calcutta: carefully planned carnage

The other theory, one that the Margis themselves have publicly contributed to, is that the crime was engineered by the Marxists themselves for their own devious reasons. In support of this theory is the indisputable fact that the locations where the mob violence took place are all pocket boroughs of the CPI-M, the residents being largely refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan.

Slow Police: The latter theory has gained extra credence because of the fact that the police only arrived at the spot two hours after the incident even though there is a police station a stone's throw away. Further, the first arrests were made 12 hours after the incident when the real culprits had obviously got clean away. Even senior police officers in Calcutta are convinced that the actions of the police indicate that section of the top police brass was the plot and acted accordingly.

There is, of course, a third one that has arisen inevitably out of controversial image the sect painted with. This theory, which Government has tacitly supported that the killings were the hand former Ananda Margis who had with the sect. The only credibility contains is its parity with the gruesome murders of Ananda M jungles of Singhbhum over a decad killings had been attributed Marga terrorist squads by Spec investigators.

But with the theories bein tailored to suit partisan ends it s obvious that truth will not out. has refused independen on the gr "there is atmosphere independen inquiry". Governmen dered a quiry but it that any s velations w

Politi tion: The the Mar been invo long-runni which dat 1967 when sis were broad d Purulia West Ben when the heard after the Marx

ment, the courts revealed politi tion behind the crime. Similar followed in rapid succession. doubtedly by the sect's decision t global headquarters in Calcutta of the lion's den.

The latest incidents, however ceeded in once again focussing the on the Margis at a time when required it. After a long spell ridden and adverse publicity, the receded into the background couple of years to recoup the faced in the early '70s following "defections". The Calcutta killings paved the way for the Home M reopen the bulky file it has on the file that has succeeded in keeping on the ministry's active list of

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e cites the Margis as being cap-
ts of sabotage, violence and
actions that the Margis vehe-
y. But of all the religious and
gious sects that have sprouted in
y since the '60s, the Ananda
rtainly the most suspect, mainly
its bizarre rituals involving human
daggers, its tightly controlled
its seemingly unlimited funds.

DEST beginning in a railway
in Jamalpur, Bihar, was hardly
e of its later notoriety. Ten
ended that meeting called by
anjan Sarkar, a former journalist
way clerk, who the Margis ve-
God. Sarkar promised to show his
followers the "path of bliss"
Marga). Established as a socio-
ganisation called Ananda Marga
Sangh its motto was "The libe-
e self and service to the world".
Tantra Yoga or Vidhya Tantra,
system of meditation and elab-
oo-like rituals.

the Ananda Marga ideology was
cktail of anti-Marxist and anti-
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which three million are in India.
self is an enigmatic figure sup-
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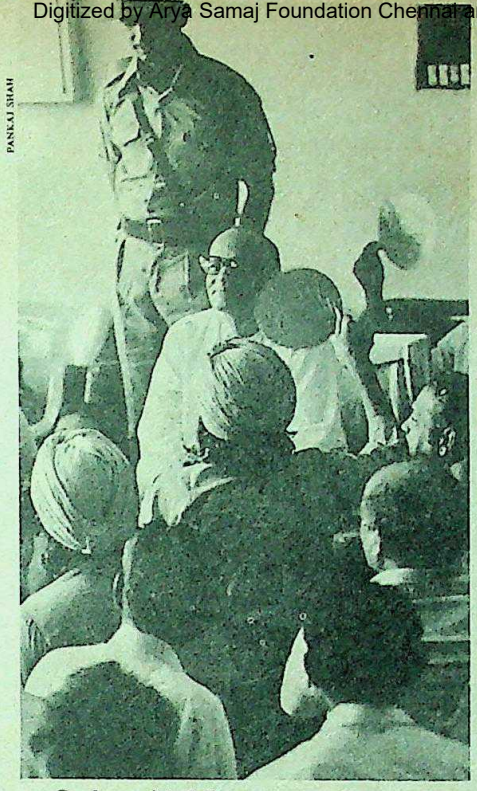


PANKAJ SHAH

Sarkar with followers: mystic appeal

Margis can be found sitting in front of a garlanded portrait of Anand Murti, as Sarkar is known, chanting Baba Nam Kevalam ("only Baba's name").

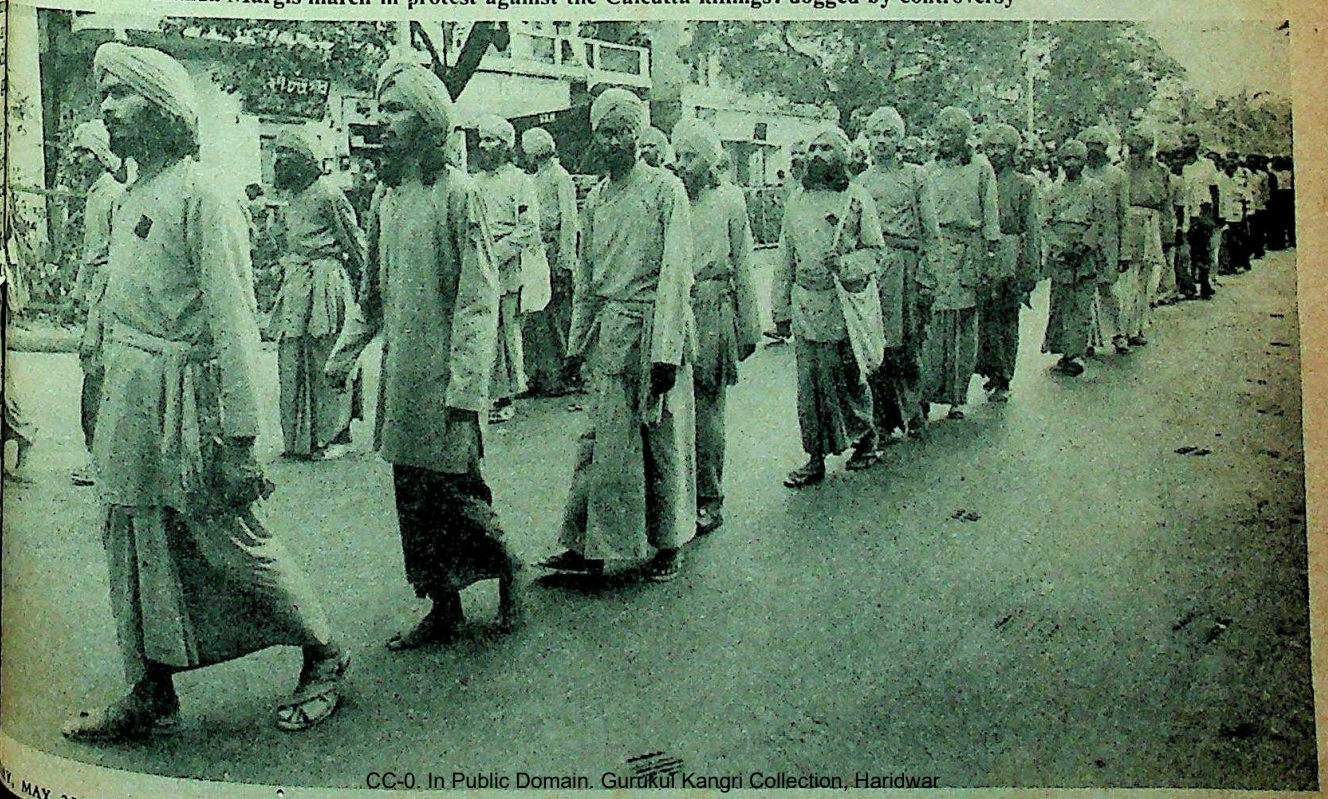
A man whose early life was spent in meditation and long periods of wandering through the forests near Jamalpur, Sarkar has kept himself aloof from the world and rarely, if ever, meets anybody outside the tight-knit Ananda Marga circle. And yet, it is Sarkar who has attracted the most controversy. His ideology of Prout (Progressive Utilisation Theory) based on spiritual self-liberation, attracted a wide gamut of followers in India and abroad.

Difficult Rituals: To become an accepted Margi is not easy. Selection is strict and elaborate and difficult rituals are performed daily. For self-liberation Margis practise a set of 18 pseudo-scientific rituals meant to cleanse and cool the body. These include drinking water after urination; retraction of the foreskin; no cutting of body hair which is washed every day; a semi-bath before every meal in which the eyes are splashed 16 times and water poured on the genitals, and the top of the head; and a ban on foodstuff that the Margis consider harmful like garlic, onion, coffee, tea, mint or aerated drinks.

However, the most controversial part of their rituals is the Tandava Nritya, a stylised dance performed with a human skull in one hand and a dagger in the other. Another ritual practised by the sanyasis is their midnight meditation which they do in burial grounds or cremation sites. According to chief spokesman Jagdishwarananda, the rituals are harmless and have been misunderstood. The skull and dagger are symbolic, the skull symbolising man's mortality and the dagger symbolising the power to slice through the bondages that humans are subjected to. "It is a dance of joy and an integral part of tantrik rituals," says Jagdishwarananda.

Nonetheless the bizarre nature of the

Ananda Margis march in protest against the Calcutta killings: dogged by controversy



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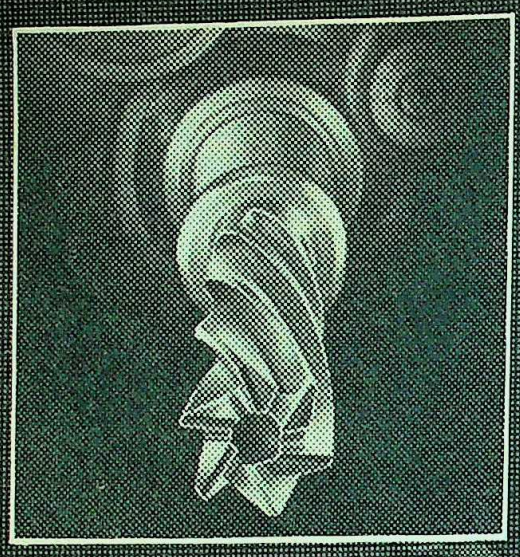

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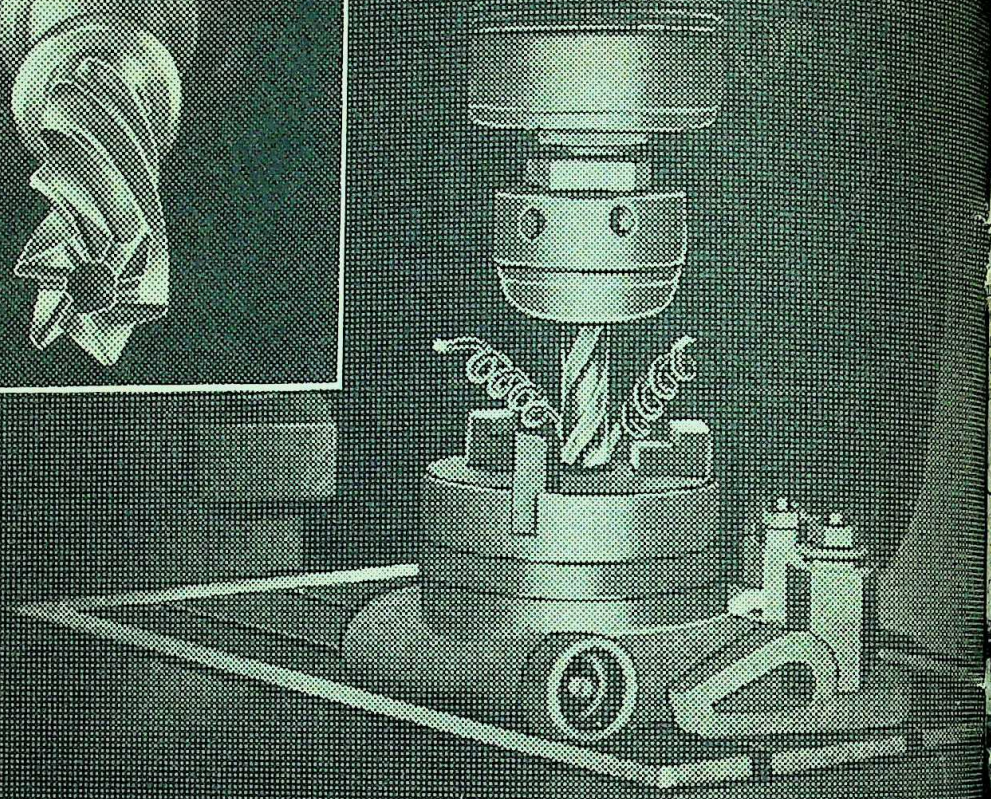

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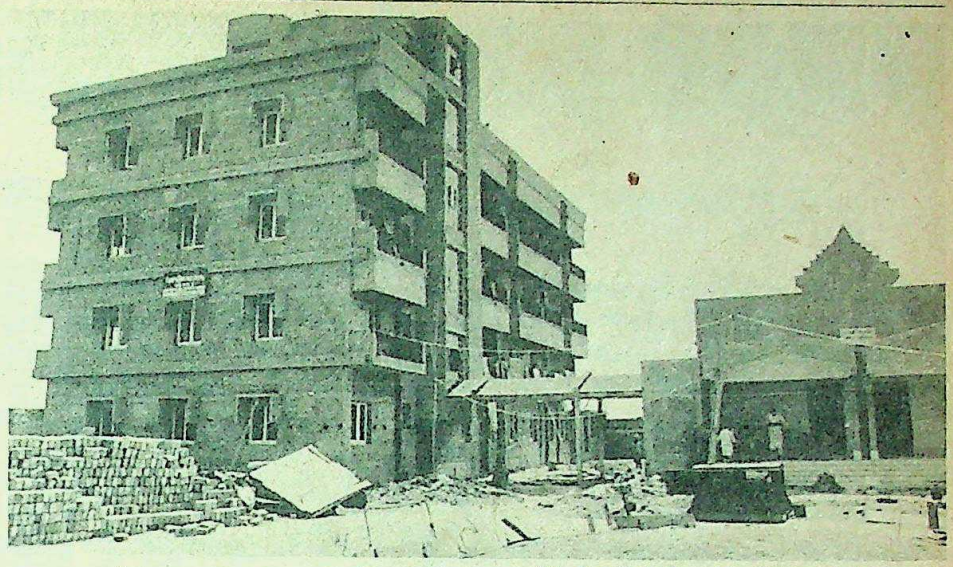

BIKASH DAS

The Global Jagriti building at Tiljala

Ananda Margis performing the Tandava Nritya: saviours or terrorists?

...ded in tarring the Margis with ...gic brush and they were accused ... in the occult. The Margis ...ther notoriety in 1969 when a ...nference organised in Cooch ... in bloody clashes and Sarkar ...bers were arrested. The Margis ...e clashes were organised by the ... government. In October 1971, ... faced their biggest challenge ...'s wife Uma left her husband ... in with Sarkar's private sec... with her went a large number ...o professed their disgust at the ...ich the Margis were employing.

...onal Charges: Uma Sarkar pub...ced that the reason for her ...husband was that she could no ...n a silent spectator to what she ...inhuman, brutal and senseless ...in the Marga. Sarkar himself ...ing in Patna jail on charges of ...instigating the murder of six ex...kar's arrest and the sensational ...de by his wife launched the ... the front pages, a position they ...d to occupy for quite some time. ...demonstrations demanding his ... organised abroad and in India. ... violent incidents allegedly in... Margis followed and included ...Indian High Commission and ...in Canberra and Sydney, the ... the Indian consul-general in ...and an Air-India officer in Melbourne, stoning of the India Tourist Office and the stabbing of an official in the Indian High Commission in London and a bomb blast in the Indian Embassy grounds in Katmandu. The responsibility for the incidents was claimed by the Proutist Revolutionary Group. Though the Margis deny any links with the group, intelligence files state that it is the terrorist wing of the Ananda Marga.

In July 1975, the Emergency regime of Mrs Gandhi banned the organisation, a ban that was subsequently lifted by the Janata Party in April 1977. However, the agitations for Sarkar's release continued and led to two reported cases of self-immolation by Margis. Sarkar was finally released on bail in August 1979 amid scenes of great jubilation by his followers. Since then the Margis have been relatively quiet, gradually rebuilding the organisation, but still carefully watched by Central Bureau of Investigation sleuths.

Ample Funds: What the sleuths are really interested in is the source of the Marga funds. According to Margi spokesmen, their funds come from various and legitimate sources. Every member donates 2 per cent of his earnings each month to the organisation. The Margis are divided into nine self-contained global sectors which generate their own funds from over 400 schools, agricultural income from 156 plots of land and money from printing presses.

The latest incidents in Calcutta, however, are certain to prove demoralising for the organisation and equally certain to lead to more violence. The Margis claim that they have evidence that top ministers in the West Bengal Government were involved and that they will produce the evidence "at the right time". Meanwhile, they are conducting a signature campaign for support in their demand for a Central probe into the Calcutta carnage. So far, say Margi sources, they have collected 10 signatures of prominent opposition leaders and hope to get enough to convince the Government to change its mind.

But having banned the organisation once, Mrs Gandhi will obviously be in no mood to oblige, particularly with elections around the corner. The safest bet is that the Margis will take to the streets once again, thereby resurrecting the controversy that surrounds them and adding yet another question mark to the query—spiritual saviours or tantrik terrorists?

—DILIP BOBB and ASOKA RAINA with SUMANTA SEN in Calcutta

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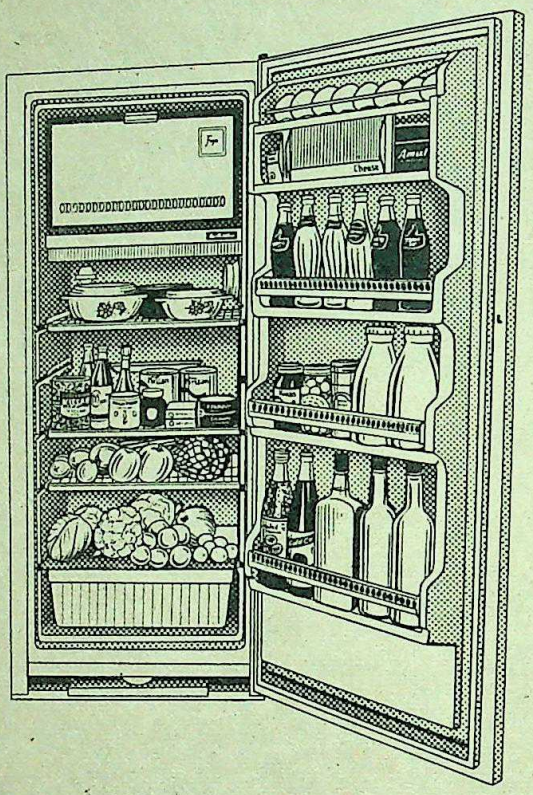

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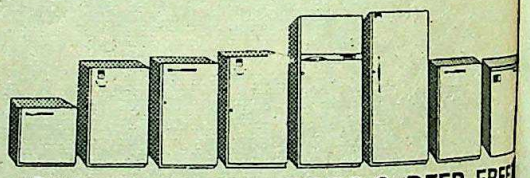

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...hletic Extravaganza

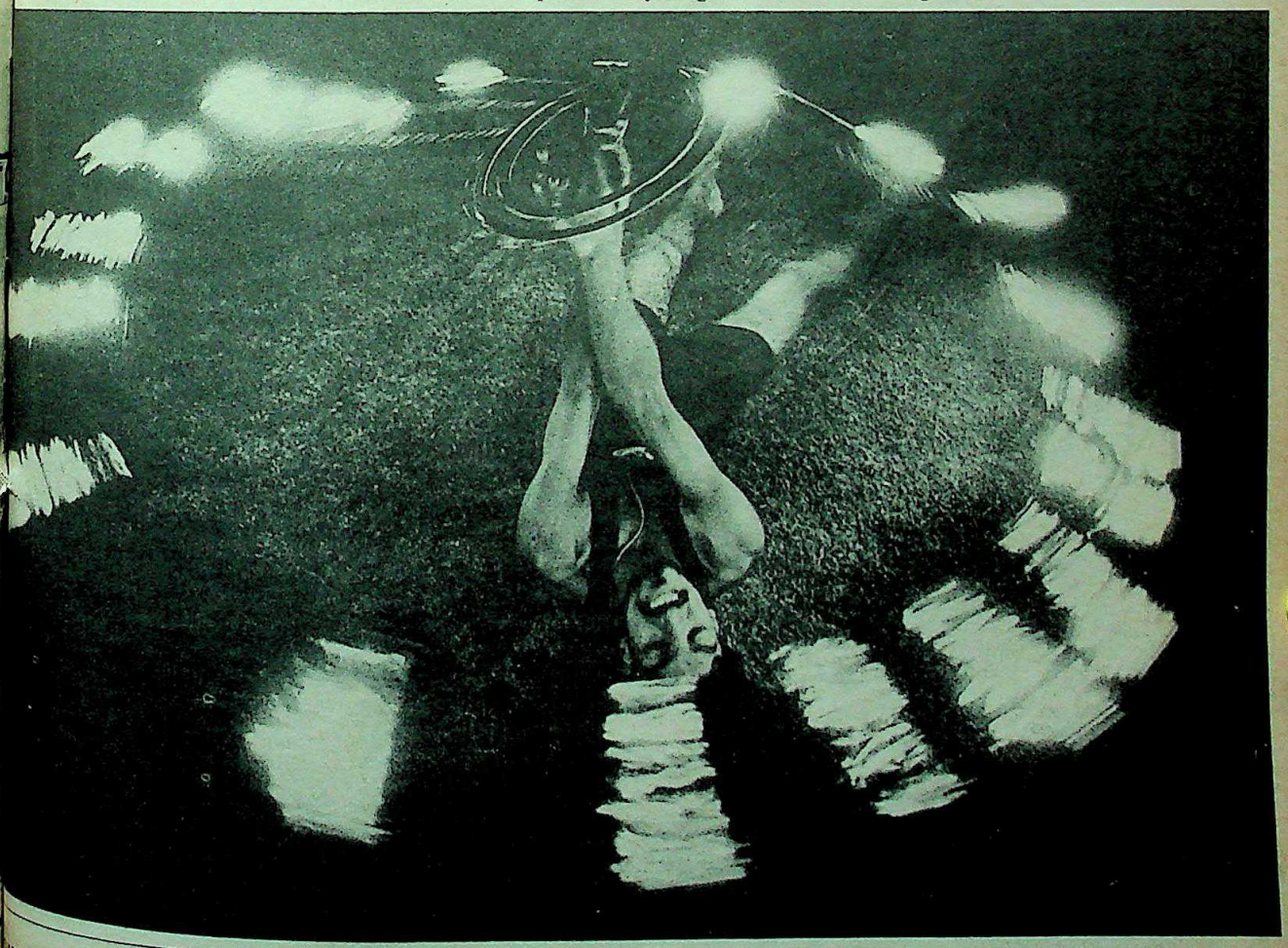
...NDER a grey, thundery sky, the ...wooden pillar rooted firmly in the ...ground looked like the relic of a ...great monument. Seven young ...boy of ten squatted in a quarter-...by, eyeing the pillar eagerly. A ...rang out: "*Chal*! (Go!)". One ...leapt away from his companions, ...swift strides, flung his arms and ...the pillar and straddled it upside ...ing on with thighs and forearms. ...queaking on wood, muscles work-...ly, the athlete wriggled up until he ...d the wooden knob at the top. A ...s later, his right leg was braced ...polished wood and his left was ...mly round the knob. Then the ...g out: hands on hips, it froze at 90 ...the vertical for all of five-muscle-...seconds. Then the tendons and ...ned and he came down to earth.

sana in corpore sano. Healthy minds in healthy bodies the Indian way—that is the credo of the young man and his 170 fellow students of the Shree Hanuman Vyayam Prasarak Mandal, who had come to the capital all the way from Amravati, Maharashtra to demonstrate on the lawns of the National Stadium how Indians used to keep fighting fit centuries ago. Slim, muscular bodies shinnied up and down poles, swayed and feinted in the heat of a duel with javelins and rent the air with shouts as a single lithe figure fought off with a stick and a small circular shield the challenge of a dozen men armed with similar sticks. In between, boys and girls pirouetted gracefully to the rhythms of *lezim*, an age-old ballet work-out from Maharashtra.

Inexpensive Exercise: Founded as a small gymnastic club in 1914 by Anant Krishna Vaidya and Ambadas Krishna Vaidya, the Mandal is devoted to modernizing and systematising the Indian system of exercises to bring about a renaissance of Indian physical culture. Today, six decades later, the Mandal occupies a 50-acre campus with a multi-purpose sports pavilion, a large swimming pool, a number of boys and girls hostels, extensive grounds and staff quarters. Besides the Indian exercise programmes, the Mandal also provides for regular games like table tennis and judo, and runs certificate courses in physical education. But its aim has always been to propagate the doctrine of inexpensive physical culture.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the young men and the wooden pillar. The exercise is called the *malkhamb* and provides for all-round development of the body. The athletes pit muscle against wood and gravity and the results are startling: one hour a day of disciplined contortion is all that it needs to build a physique that could rival Bruce Lee's. Variations of the *malkhamb* include a free-swinging pole and a long length of flexible and extremely tough cane. The Mandal's *malkhamb* specialists, about 25 in number,

Teeth clenched in concentration, a prostrate young man whirls his ring of fire



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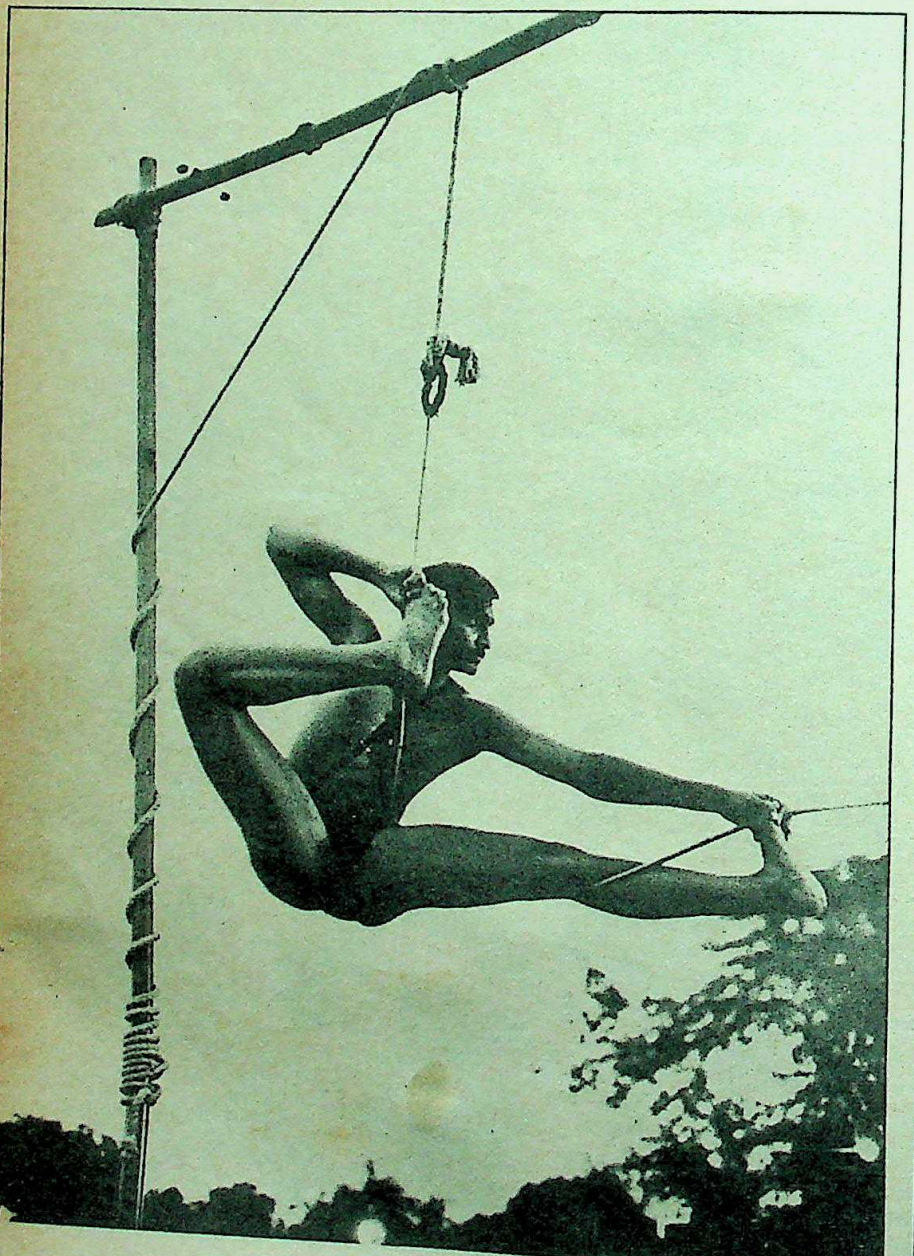
are adept at coiling the cane around themselves so that they can take up a number of yoga postures

Much to the chagrin of the audience—which included Information and Broadcasting Minister Vasant Sathe and Minister of State for Education Shiela Kaul—this series of heart-stopping events gave way to javelin, stick and sword duels. Just as the warriors of kingdoms now part of the dust of history must have trained centuries ago, two young men of the Mandal confronted each other with glittering javelins, circling warily and lunging suddenly until one of them waved both javelins triumphantly as the other watched dejectedly. The crowning act of this series was one man taking on a dozen with flailing stick and shield: his opponents could not lay a finger on him.

As the repertoire of 35 items unreeled to its end after two and a half hours, and the dusk deepened into night, out came the torches. Boys, girls, men and women drilled under the smoking flames of half a hundred torches, wheeling into and out of patterns The *pièce-de-resistance* of the fire play was a young man who took two wires with torches at their ends and whirled them around faster and faster and faster while a soft hissing filled the air. The hissing continued even as he sank smoothly to the grass, prostrate with his mesmeric wheel of fire, until the torches exhausted themselves in the warm night air.

—JAGANNATH DUBASHI

An aggressively confident *malkhamb* pose (right) and (below) the *dhanurasana* with a little help from a length of cane



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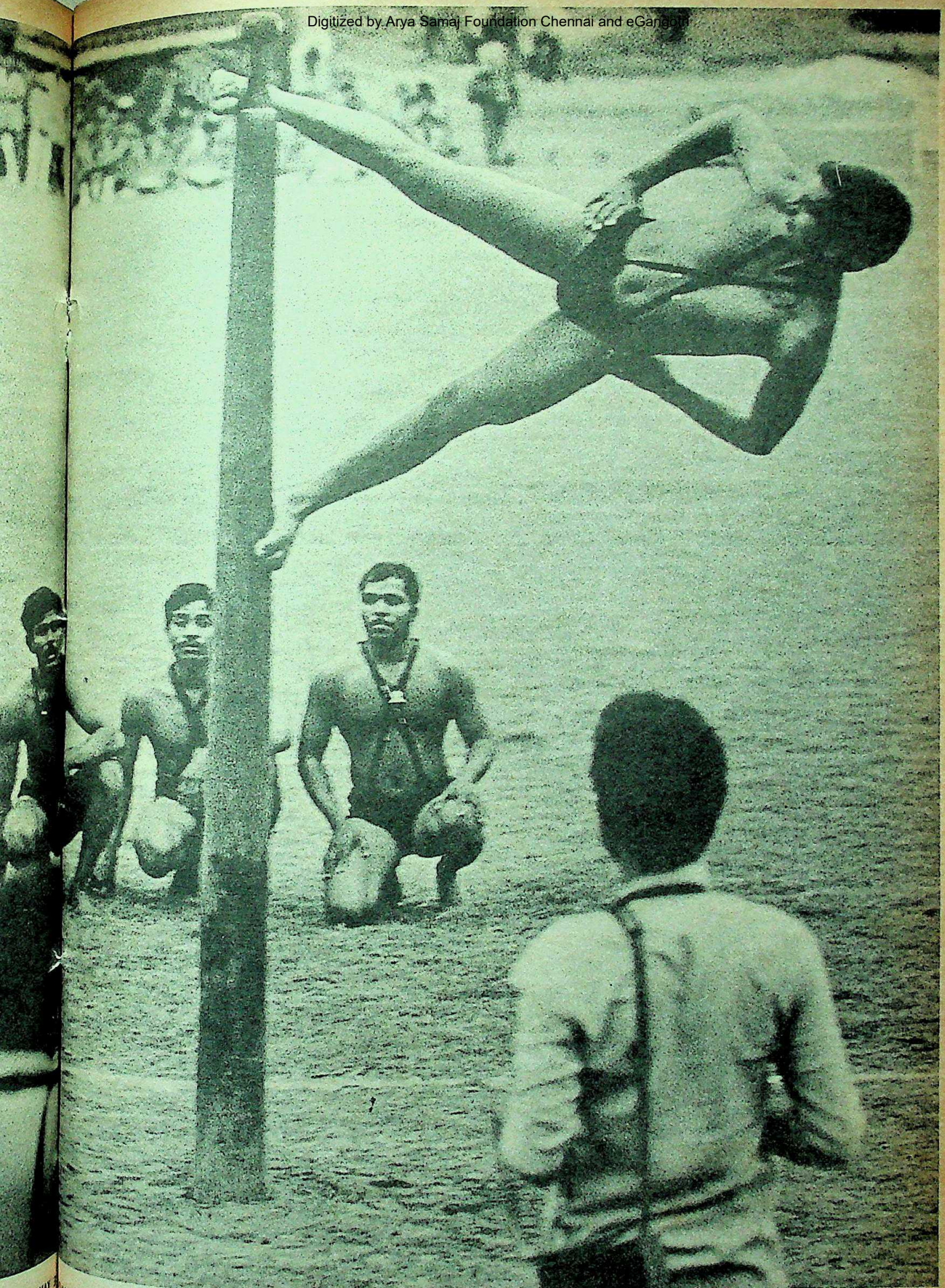

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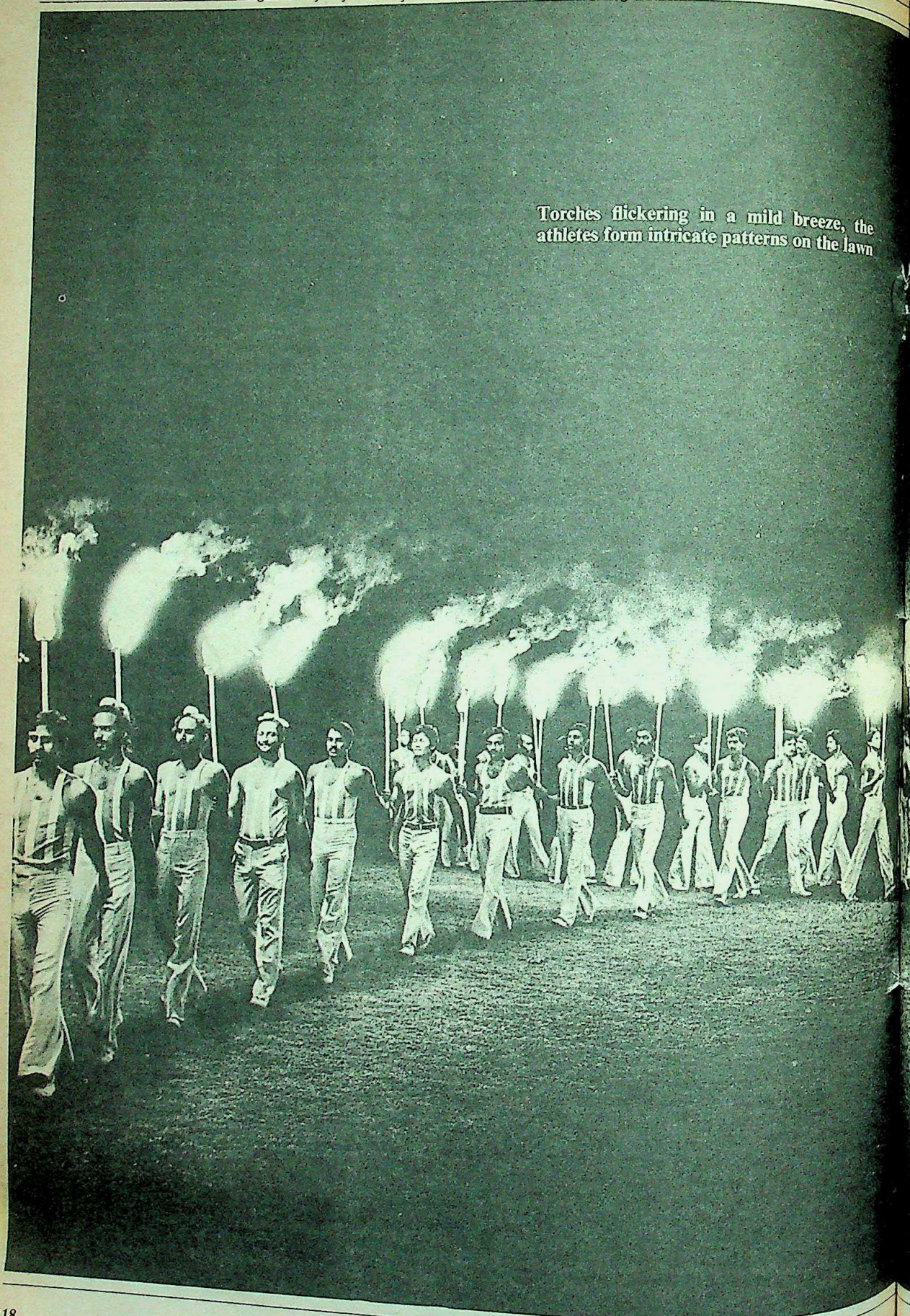

Torches flickering in a mild breeze, the athletes form intricate patterns on the lawn

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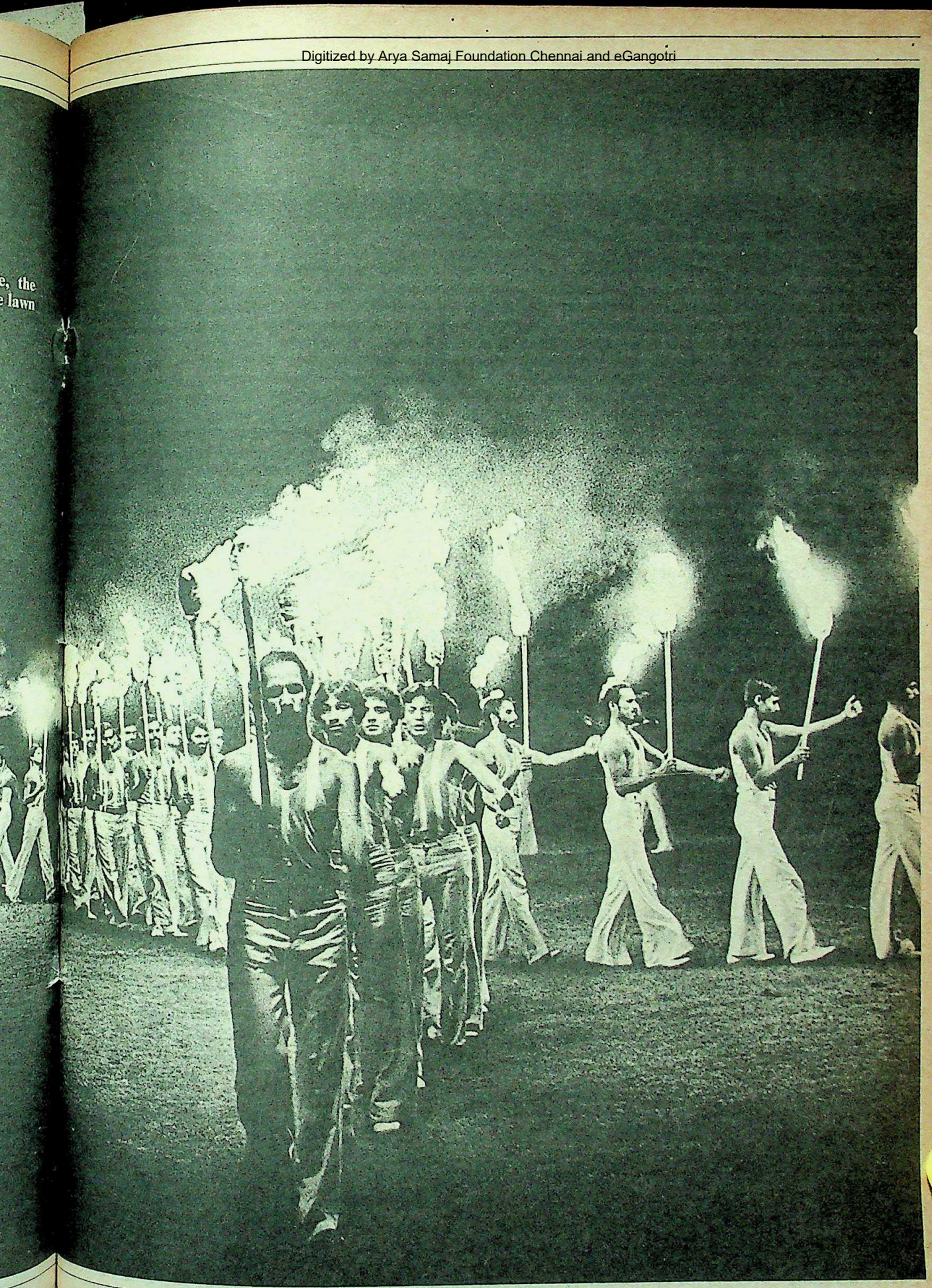

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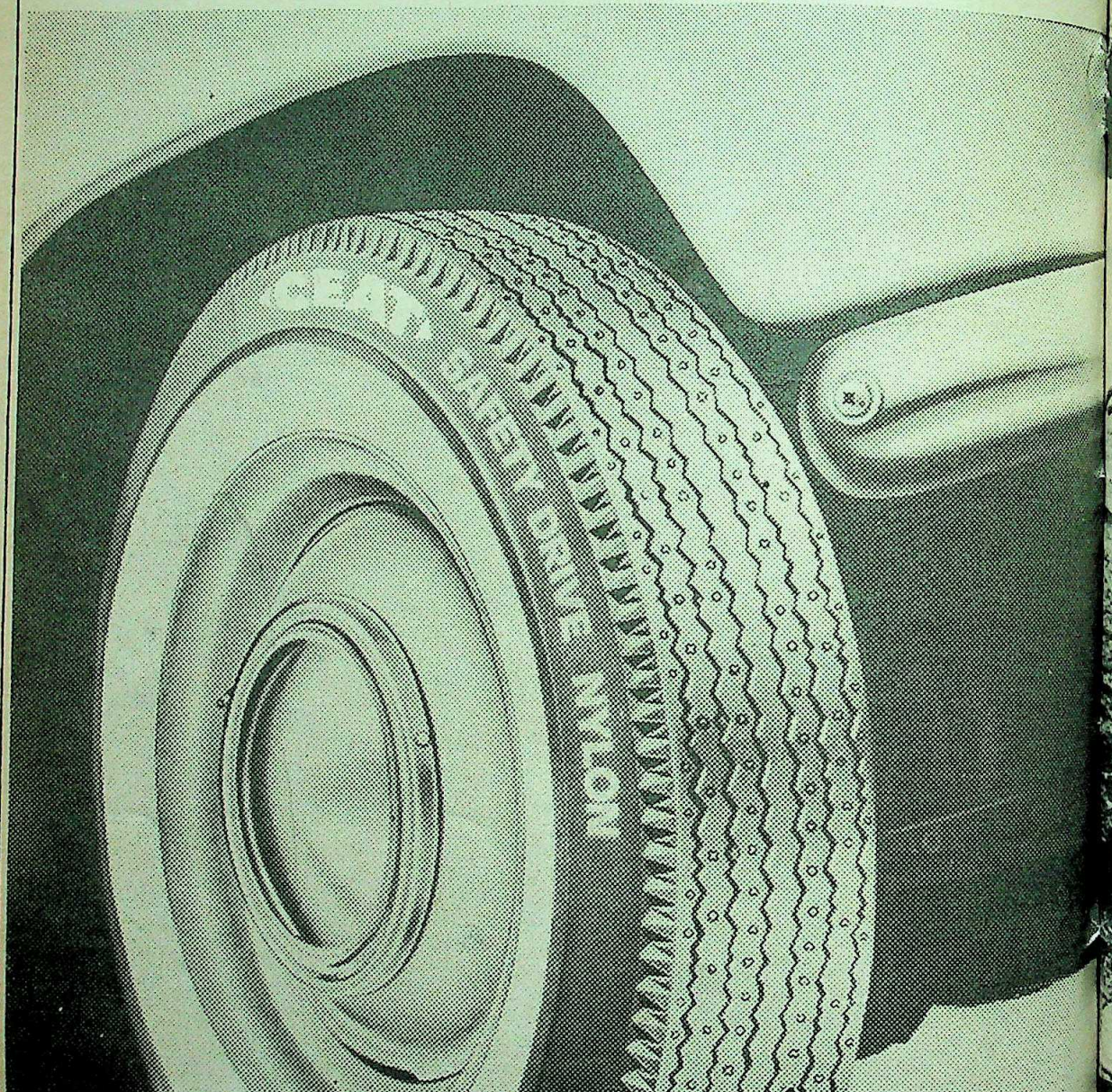

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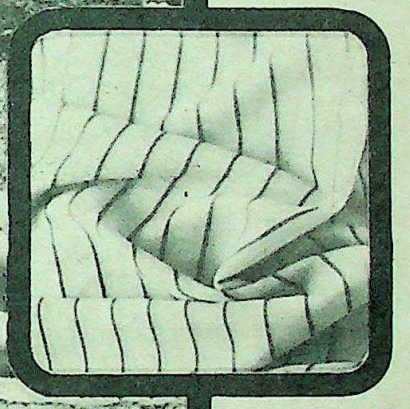

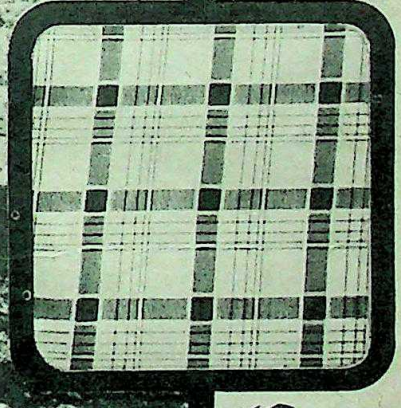

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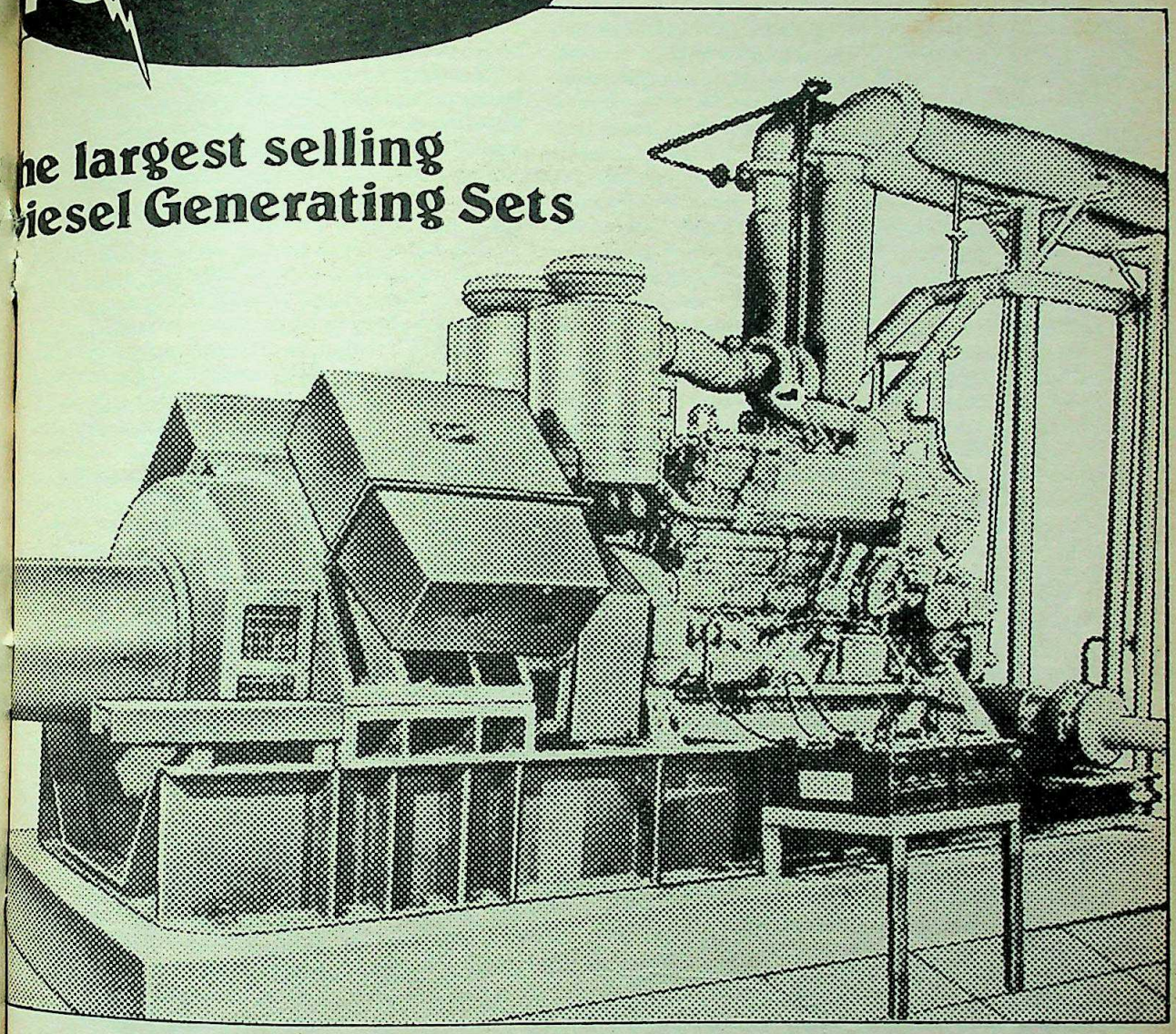

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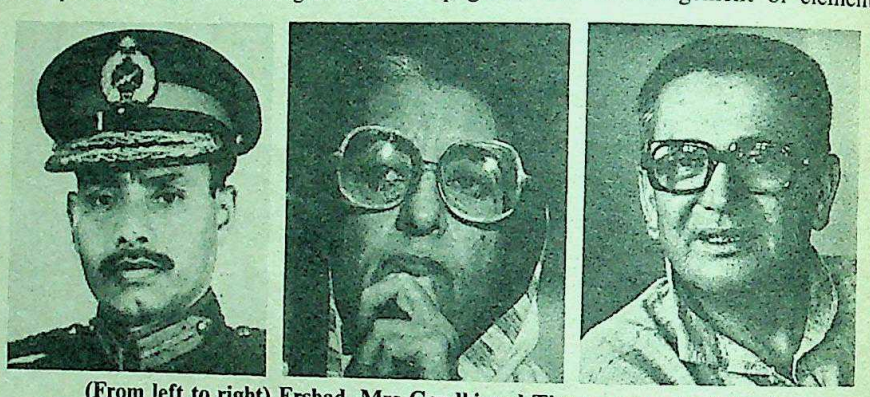
A Crisis Of Confidence

IT IS greatly unfortunate that the Indo-Pakistan dialogue on a no-war pact and treaty of friendship should have stalled for no good reason. It would be even more tragic if the new and critical phase of dialogue about to open with Bangladesh and Nepal, with both of whom also India has an uneasy relationship, is aborted on mistaken premises.

The Government of India has virtually denounced the 1977 Accord with Bangladesh on sharing the lean season flows of the Ganga at Farakka. The Agreement is subject to review six months before its expiry on November 4,1982 and the Irrigation Minister, Kedar Pande is accordingly soon scheduled to meet his counterpart, the Adviser for Agriculture & Water Resources, Obaidullah Khan. Fortunately, both sides have recognised that the stalemate is political rather than technical. The review meeting has consequently been postponed to permit an earlier meeting of the two foreign ministers. Significantly, Bangladesh will be represented by no less than the Chief Martial Law Administrator, General Ershad.



(From left to right) Ershad, Mrs Gandhi and Thapa: mutual mistrust

Each side vetoed the proposal made by the other for augmenting lean season flows in the Ganga. Bangladesh favours a series of storage dams in Nepal and a navigation canal that would give that landlocked country an outlet to the sea. India advocates diversion from the Brahmaputra to the Ganga through a link canal backed by storages on the Brahmaputra and Barak in Arunachal and Manipur-Cachar respectively. Both packages entail hydel power generation and flood control. India is already engaged in bilateral negotiations with Nepal and sees no merit in trilateral discussions, as proposed by Bangladesh, which it fears might only complicate matters. Bangladesh for its part is wary of the Indian scheme on technical grounds and on account of the substantial displacement of population and loss of agricultural lands that it believes a massive link canal through its territory must entail. An earlier Indian formulation suggested an immediate start on the link canal, relegating Brahmaputra storages to a subsequent phase if necessary and commercially viable. This has created apprehensions that diversion of lean flows might deplete the Brahmaputra to unacceptable levels in relation to ecological and economic requirements.

Statesmanship: Essentially, what is involved is a crisis of confidence that can only be overcome by bold statesmanship. Neither side can afford failure of the forthcoming talks. It is facile to believe that India can ignore Bangladesh's legitimate interests and go it alone. Any effort to do so would entail mortgaging the vast potential of the Brahmaputra-Barak system and the and well-being of the sensitive North-East which is landlocked and needs Bangladesh's cooperation for tra ocean outlets, largely through traditional waterways. Havi the extreme step, the Bangladesh military must in turn some success in rehabilitating a fragile polity and water economy or risk a dangerous breakdown which certain be in India's interest. The stakes are too high for me and petty rigidities.

Optimised water resource development and sharin ensured in a climate of confidence and trust. Hence the a broader frame than just Farakka and a serious and sin to put Indo-Bangladesh relations on a more even ke extraordinary failure to ratify and implement the 197 agreement inspires little confidence. An end to mu paganda and encouragement of elements hostile to th liberalised p and proced trade, transit change, and g on India's part ing the n boundary wi ladesh which otherwise be what narro med in by leg dents in the d of its exclusiv mic zone (thr ing its ability t an adequate f tein diet supplement) are issues to be tually negotiated in a framework of fr and cooperation.

Larger Understanding: With r water resources, both sides should a conditionally to pursue considerati other's augmentation scheme within time frame together with such amen additions or alternatives that migh posed. A clarification by India that posed link canal is firmly tied to putra storages in a single package wou provide needed reassurance to Dacca on sharing of the waters of the Tis Khowai and other common rivers a larly necessary. India's Tista barra instance, is due to be commissioned ne These smaller river systems affect sug communities on both sides of the bord should not be permitted to become contentious issues. Those who would argue against "conces to Bangladesh must realise that the benefits from these concessions will far outweigh the costs. India can help helping Bangladesh. The 1977 Accord meanwhile provi basis for interim sharing at Farakka which is most necessary augmentation plan will take many years to fructify. It must be extended or renegotiated as part of a larger understa that permits wider trade-offs.

'It would be even more tragic if the new and critical phase of dialogue about to open with Bangladesh and Nepal with both of whom also India has an uneasy relationship, is aborted on mistaken premises.

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's relations with Nepal too are sadly founded on mutual which does little good to either side. After considerable which both sides have contributed, the outlines of have been reached on two giant water resource ent projects on the Karnali and Mahakali (Sharda) and a me on the Rapti. India has fallen in with Nepal's desire international consultants and appropriate terms of are to be settled—hopefully, soon. Nepal has plans to me smaller rivers on which joint consultation would armonisation of interests and optimisation of results. o anxious to persuade Nepal about the urgency of a high e Kosi in order finally to tame this very turbulent and y silt-laden river. Sedimentation control necessitates soil conservation and afforestation programmes in the hments, which is another area in which Nepal and India ar found themselves sadly unable to cooperate.

l's concerns about submergence and phasing also suggest ladesh's proposal for 12 storage dams to augment Ganga n flows will not find automatic acceptance. Nevertheless, willing to consider a regional approach in the matter of source development without prejudice to bilateral on, provided Bangladesh and India make a joint request. ed Nepal has a stake in Calcutta-Haldia port which is its and, for long, sole outlet to the sea and cannot therefore rested in Farakka which will enable navigation up the o Barauni from where Nepal's trade could be more tly transhipped either way.

l's Worry: Transit problems, especially delays at Calcutta lex documentation and other procedures, have become a rry for Nepal while Indian caution is partly occasioned on f deflection and smuggling of "sensitive" items from and into India. While the sensitivities and fears might be exaggerated on both sides, there is little doubt that containerisation and the designation of agreed dry ports in Nepal with appropriate inter-modal rail, road or navigation links would vastly improve the situation.

Confidence building requires discussion of a whole gamut of issues at a high level. Technical and organisational details are no doubt important but could be worked out later by experts. Unfortunately, as with Bangladesh, political consultation has often become an appendage to technical bargaining. The time is therefore ripe for joint inter-governmental discussions to establish an appropriate frame of reference. In this context, Nepal's desire to be accepted as a zone of peace (ZOP) merits sympathetic consideration, notwithstanding its treaty with India (as with China) which will remain good. China has stated its willingness to accept the ZOP concept. Nepal's Prime Minister, Surya Bahadur Thapa, recently told this writer in Kathmandu that it was Nepal's "birthright" to be regarded as a zone of peace as it was the land of the Buddha. He also urged a new dimension to traditional Indo-Nepal relations based on the emerging personality of a new Nepal as much as a new India. While some influential spokesmen are on record as viewing Nepal as more than a South Asian entity, since it straddles the Himalaya and abuts on the Tibetan plateau (as does India in Ladakh), other Nepalese do not regard the kingdom as a buffer and believe that China's relations with Nepal are influenced by the prevailing state of Sino-Indian relations at any point of time.

The current mistrust between India and Nepal and Bangladesh needs to be overcome in favour of a more genuinely cooperative approach. All would stand to gain. Contrarily, if alienation hardens into hostility, the costs could be enormous. As the larger and stronger partner by far, the initiative lies with India.

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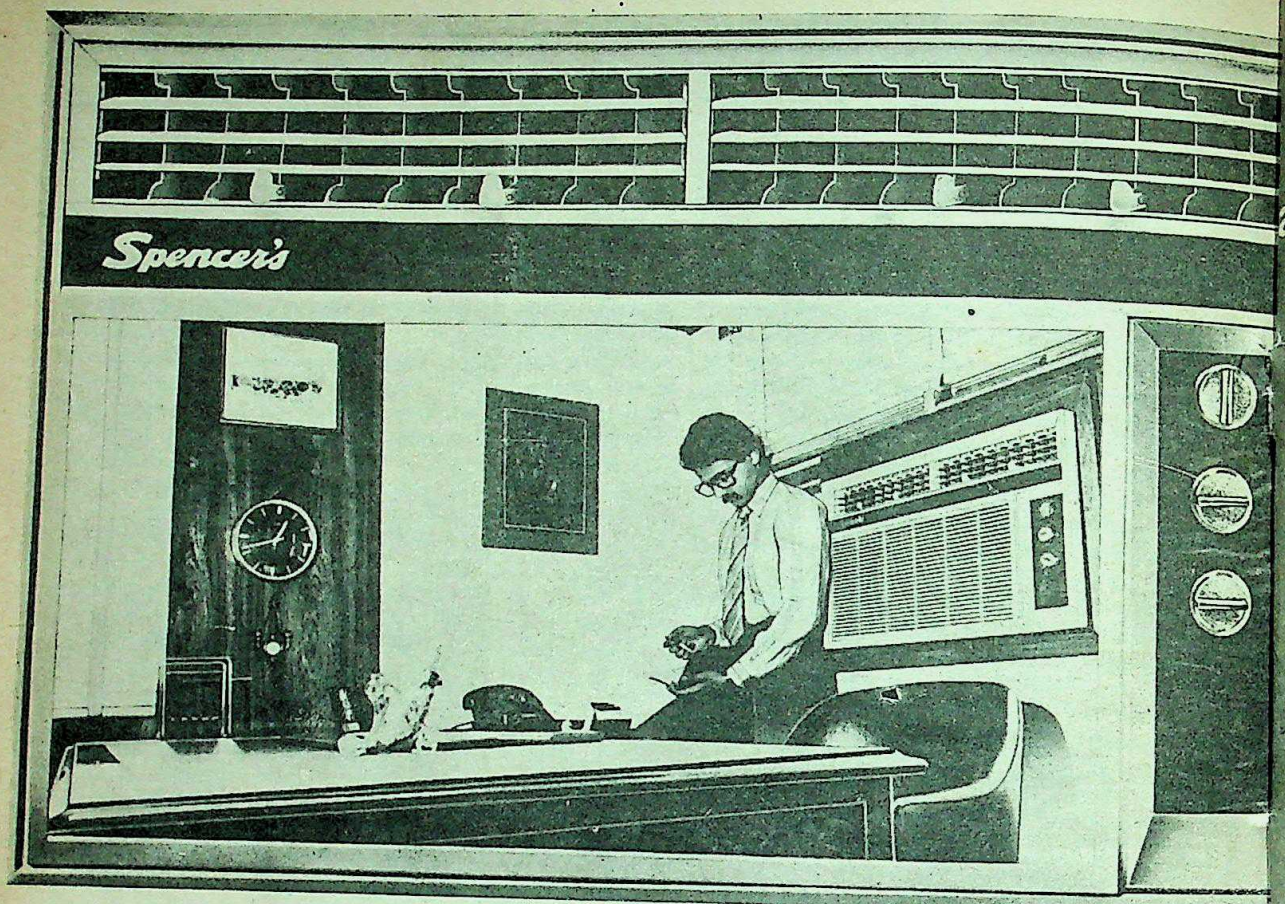

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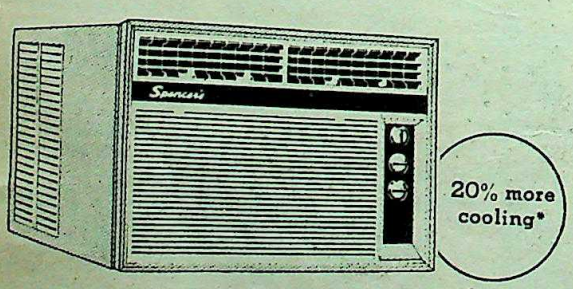

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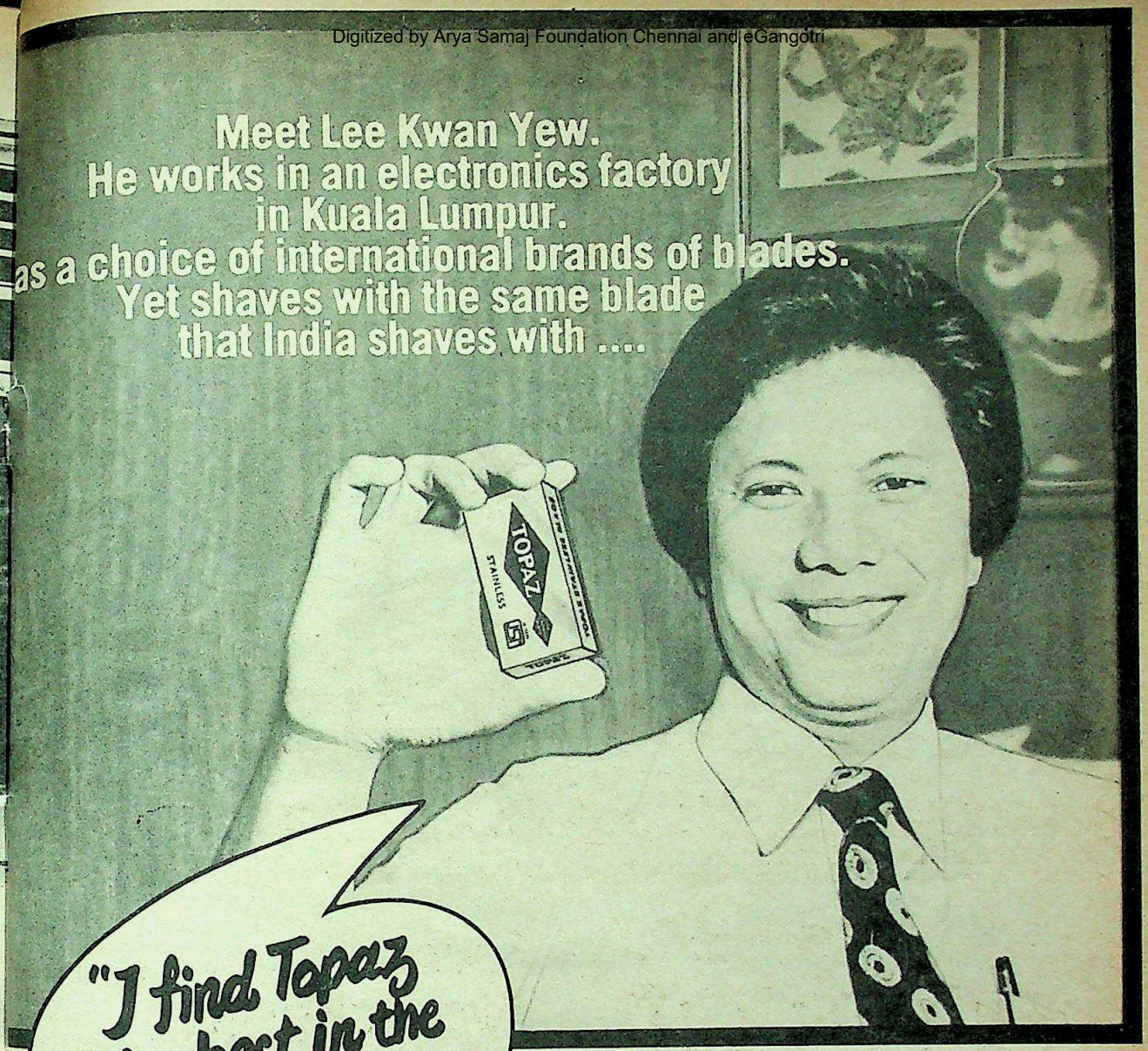

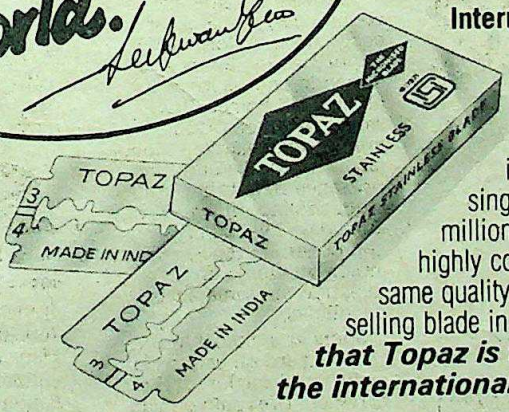

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KIDNAP VICTIMS

Held To Ransom

THE dacoit-infested badlands of Uttar Pradesh have fast acquired a notoriety unmatched in the country's history. Though largely a history written in blood, Uttar Pradesh's dacoits, barring a few, still loot and pillage at will, seemingly unaffected by the massive anti-dacoity drives launched periodically. In recent years, however, they have largely concentrated their nefarious activities on kidnapping well-heeled victims and holding them for ransom.

For obvious reasons, the number of kidnappings recorded officially are only a fraction of the total. Official figures show that kidnappings shrunk from 52 in 1980 to 23 in 1981 but the actual figure is obviously much higher, as is the total takings in ransom money. To gain an insight into the modus operandi of the kidnappers and also the feelings and experiences of the victims, Lucknow Correspondent ANAND SAGAR *together with Photographer* S. PREMI *toured the 12 districts in the state that collectively embraces "dacoit country" in an effort to track down some of the victims and obtain a first-hand account of their respective ordeal. His report:*

IN FEBRUARY, dusk comes early in Etawah district and the bus bumping along the route from Orai to Vaithganj had to brake sharply to avoid hitting a pair of bullock-carts blocking the Kukargaon bridge. Suddenly, gunfire erupted from the sides of the road sending the terrified passengers diving for the floor. When the last shot had died away, the rear door of the bus was flung open and two armed men in police uniforms with their faces hidden behind scarves entered and relieved the cringing passengers of their valuables. But the real motive behind the highway robbery was soon revealed. One of the passengers was Rajendra Kumar Agarwal, 22, son of a businessman from Vaithganj, Jalaun, and after the passengers had been stripped off their valuables, Agarwal was ordered out of the bus.

According to Agarwal's story related to INDIA TODAY, when he stepped out of the bus, he was immediately surrounded by six other armed men who handed him a pair of rubber-soled canvas shoes and ordered him to change his shoes and accompany them.

Ordeal: That night, the group covered at least 20 km at a fast pace and from the conversation Agarwal ascertained that he had been kidnapped by the Jagram Singh gang. For the next 12 days, Agarwal was blindfolded during the day and only recalls being shifted around from ravine hideouts to "safe houses" in villages during the nights. The dacoits rested during the day and only moved out under cover of darkness.

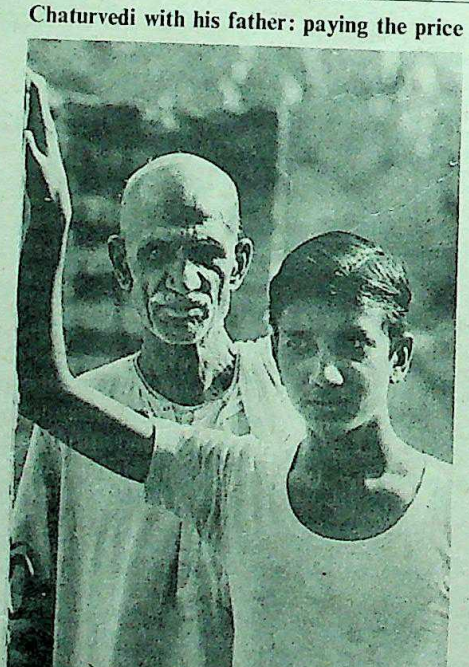
Agarwal soon realised that he was not the only kidnap victim when he met up with a 27-year-old resident of Kukargaon, Kasi Ram, who had been kidnapped a day earlier than he. On the first day of his capture, Agarwal was told to draft a letter to his family which said that unless a ransom of Rs 5,51,101 was not paid within ni would be killed. The letter was the mailbox of his father, Seth D Agarwal, a wholesale cloth me most immediately, Damodardas up by a contact man who sa empowered to conduct the ne Damodardas, in fact, dealt with contact men, whose iden understandably refused to divul

When negotiations broke Damodardas pleading that he collect Rs 50,000 and the demanding nothing less than R police were finally brought into On a fortuitous tip-off, the police that the Jagram gang were hol house in Udotpura and a

PICTURES BY S. PREMI

Agarwal in the ill-fated bus: ordeal by fire

Chaturvedi with his father: paying the price



surrounded the hideout around February 21, 12 days after kidnapping. When Jagram refuse the order to surrender, the police o According to Agarwal, the kidna had been joined by a third, Sriran had been brought in that day and lads, guarded by two dacoits, were at the rear of the house.

Pitched Battle: After several sporadic exchanges of gunfire, Ag Jagram, who had been wounded, police contingent Rs 1 lakh if they him go. Agarwal says that the po stopped firing at this point to co offer and would probably have a police reinforcements had not arri their arrival, renewed firing broke grenades were lobbed into the hous part of it on fire. The smoke finally f gang out into the open where t gunned down and the three kidna released.

Agarwal was lucky to get away paying out ransom but Cha

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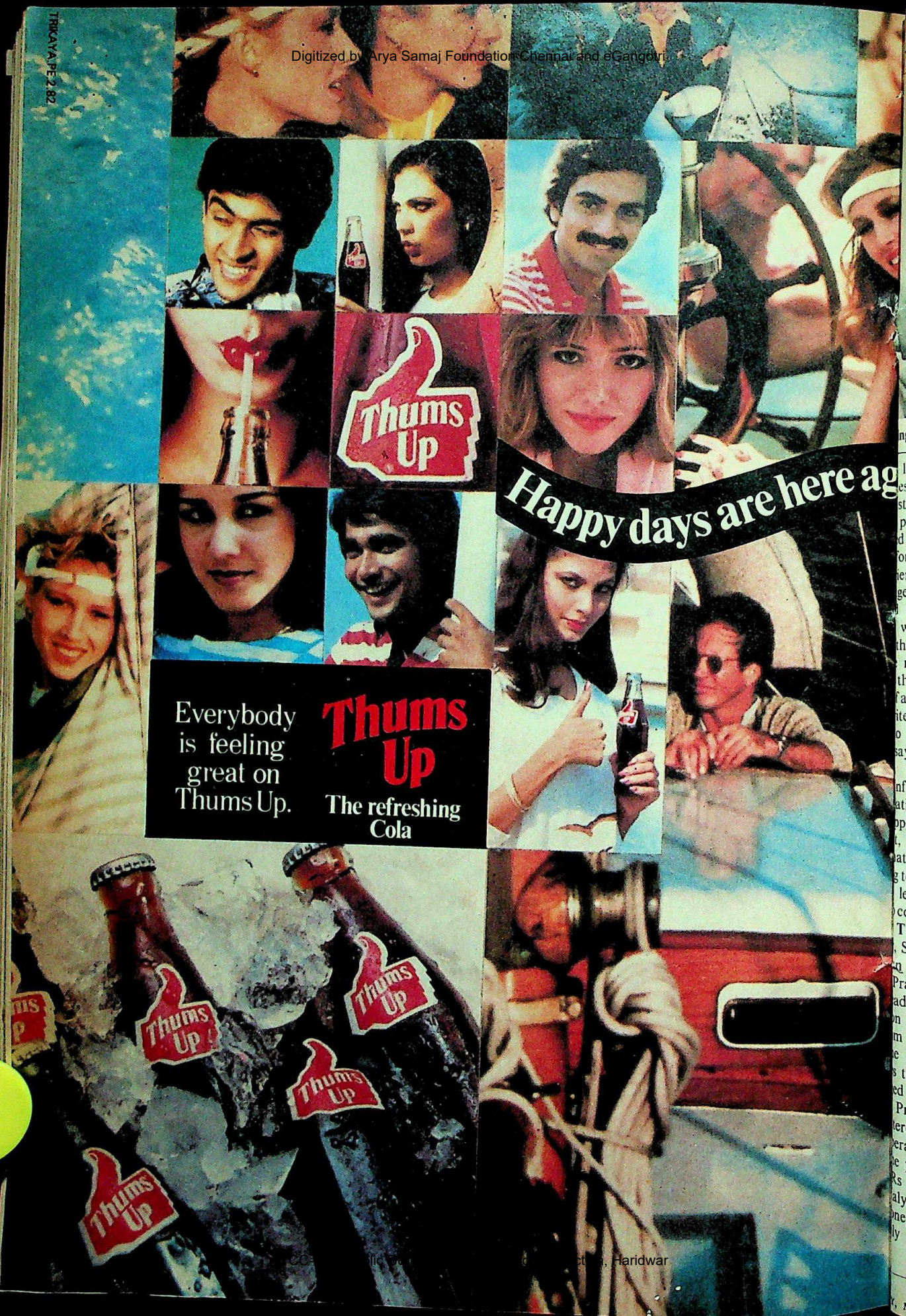

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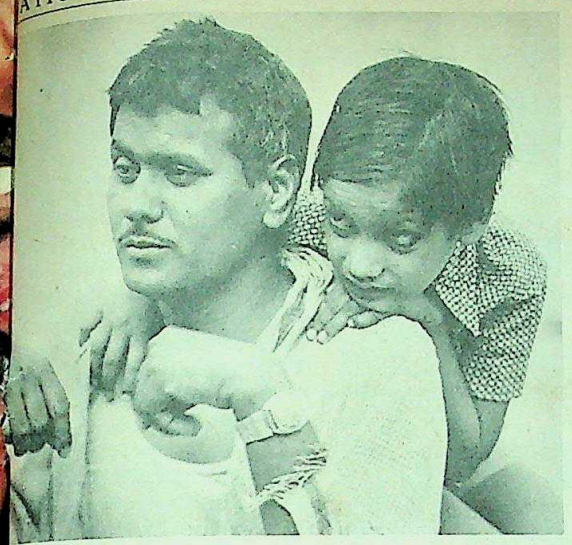
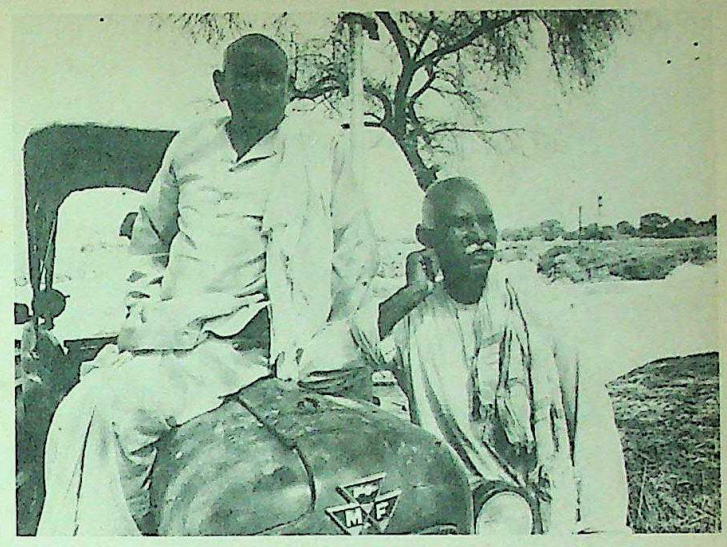


ngh Thakur with his son: carefully selected victim



Tiwari with his servant: fairly well treated

16, kidnapped in November
ess fortunate. His nightmare
sted a total of 70 days before the
paid and he was released. His
d when six armed men dressed
forms stopped the tractor he and
iends were returning on at night
ge fair. The dacoits obviously
their victim in advance for
was quickly identified and
the tractor.

next few weeks he stumbled
through the ravines trying to
a pursuing police party. He was
ite a ransom note asking for Rs
o be paid through a courier.
says that his kidnappers were led
and were obviously well-
nformers often visited the gang
ation on police movements and
pplies of food and ammunition.
, the gang shifted to a new
aturvedi was almost certain that
g to be killed since a total of four
letters had been sent to his
could only scrape up Rs 20,000.

Tactics: Finally, Chaturvedi's
Suraj Prasad, 71, arranged to
n in person and come to a
Prasad says he met Kalyan and
aded with the dacoit chief to let
n free for Rs 20,000, Kalyan
m down with a gun butt. To
e old man, two dacoits held
s to his chest while Chaturvedi
ed before him and slapped
Prasad returned to his home
tered by the experience.
eration, he arranged for the spot
e property and returned a day
s 25,000, his total life savings.
alyan late at night, he handed
ney and recovered his grandson.
ly slightly recovered from his ordeal, he fumes: 'Were it not for police and political protection which these outlaws enjoy, such professional kidnappings would not be so common."

What also aids the dacoits is their well-tuned intelligence network of informers and "protectors". This, apart from keeping them informed about police movements, also pinpoints their prospective victims and enables them to know, almost to the paisa, exactly how much the victim's family can afford to pay. Hira Singh Thakur, 32, a flour mill owner in Sirsakalar was kidnapped in December last year and released after a month for a ransom of Rs 20,000. He says that the gang brazenly walked into the mill and asked the workers which one was Hira Singh. Singh tried to bluff his way out by saying that Hira had already gone home but the dacoits were furnished with an accurate description and dragged him out in front of numerous witnesses.

Debauched Life-style: He was hidden in a mustard field for three days before being shifted to Sikri Rahmanpur, a nearby village. Singh recalls that the gang, led by Atrup Singh, were a debauched lot, indulging in drunken brawls, gang rapes and fist fights. They had hired people bringing them their meals, which they paid for faithfully and spent the days resting up and listening to loud music on transistors. No reading material was used but they listened carefully to local radio stations. Most, says Singh, were chain-smokers, vain about their appearance, and used perfumes extensively. They had a large collection of police uniforms which were washed regularly.

Every evening, they would clean and oil their weapons before putting them into a pile and then conducting "puja" before them. On one occasion, says Singh, he was witness to an informer being paid Rs 25,000 for a tip-off that had netted the gang considerable booty. Obviously, the informers are paid a percentage of the "take" if the tip is a reliable one. Before releasing a kidnap victim, they threaten the person's family with dire consequences if he opens his mouth.

In fact, most of the kidnap victims who spoke to INDIA TODAY only did so because the gangs they had been kidnapped by had been subsequently liquidated in encounters. Deo Narain Tiwari, a farmer from Orai, who was kidnapped in November 1981 and released after paying out Rs 40,000, says that dacoits usually treated their victims fairly well and gave them regular meals, which the victims were "billed" for along with the ransom. The gang that kidnapped him had a woman who was a sort of common mistress and slept with each gang member in turn. Because of their aura, says Tiwari, the dacoits have no trouble picking up village women and disappearing into the fields.

The dacoits have one strict code which they adhere to however, not one of the kidnap victims is a woman. Most of the victims are male children of businessmen or landed gentry. Shyam Sunder Purwar, a leading businessman, recalls that when he was kidnapped last March, his wife was with him. The dacoits, however, dropped his wife off after a short distance before disappearing into the night.

Purwar, who was tight-lipped about his experience, is believed to have been kidnapped by Raju Bhatnagar, a leading dacoit chief who specialises in well-organised kidnappings, and paid out ransom money amounting to Rs 2.75 lakh for his release. There are, however, hundreds of other Purwars who, like him, are reluctant to speak out for fear of retaliation. Which is what indirectly helps the dacoits maintain their stranglehold of fear and also helps the police keep their crime and kidnapping figures down.

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THE RAJ QUARTET

Recasting A Jewel

"SUNDERBAN" is the name given to the house by its present owners but its long and chequered history predates the history of Simla itself. Rising on its individual little hill in the hills of Mashobra, with its green gables and weather vane, its winding drive that boasts a greenhouse, a halfway house and a tennis court along the way, the house remains a miraculous survivor among shambling relics of the hill station in its heyday.

In earlier incarnations the house was known as "Northview" and "Apple Tree House" and its occupants once included the intrepid Sir Edward Buck, author of the archival *Simla Past and Present*. Today, lovingly restored by the retired Indian couple who own it, the house with its regimental billiard room, its sun-verandahs overlooking magnificent views of snow-capped mountains, its bedrooms laid out with brass beds and roaring fireplaces, is an evocative reminder of a more leisured age.

Temporary Change: Last fortnight, however, "Sunderban" was undergoing yet another metamorphosis, another hectic, if temporary, change of hands. Its owners slunk away into their bedroom, preferring to watch amazed from their windows the goings-on outside. A new plaque, "Rose Cottage", was being nailed to the gateposts of the house at the bottom of the drive. Pads of soft green moss and lichen were being filled into the crevices in the hillside. Tufts of mountain ferns and great profusions of flowering fuschia had erupted everywhere.

Overnight, the terrace gardens were blossoming with rose bushes and the sun-verandahs with cascades of potted geraniums in bright purple, pink and scarlet hues. And stepping into a ramshackle rickshaw in the porch was an elderly Englishwoman being seen off by a sinister-looking Englishman in an army uniform, part of his face covered by a hideous scar with a false, wooden hand protruding from a khaki sleeve.

On closer inspection it turned out that the flowers were fake, the old Englishwoman in the rickshaw was Dame Peggy Ashcroft and "Sunderban" doubling for "Rose Cottage" was a scene from novelist Paul Scott's famous set of four novels better known as *The Raj Quartet*, now being filmed as *The Jewel in the Crown* in a 14-hour television serial by Britain's Granada Television. As the most ambitious, expensive and long-drawn-out piece of fiction ever filmed in an overseas location for television, the project ended its 14-week shooting schedule in Indian locations last fortnight but will have to film for nearly another year in England before it can hit the screens either in late 1983 or in 1984.

Staggering Cost: Budgeted at a staggering cost of £5.5 million (Rs 9.9 crore) with a cast and crew of 70-odd Britons working in India, *The Jewel in the Crown* is an even bigger venture for Granada Television than *Brideshead Revisited*, their 11-part serial based on an Evelyn Waugh novel presently enjoying a huge success in America, which in comparison cost between £4 million and £5 million (Rs 7.2 crore to Rs 9 crore). And for India, it is something of a major coup after Sir Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi*, to emerge as a major location for international TV productions.

Though Indians may never see the 14-part serial at home, the logistics such an extravagant product fascinating story. In fact, so en the stakes that it took the Brit corporation—one of the big dent companies operating country—several years of deba ning to go ahead with the e Christopher Morahan, the s producer-director: "Imagine sh ssive cast and crew for nearly from places as far apart as Udaipur, Simla and Srinagar some prospect to keep the op on schedule." In fact, to allevi sions, three years before *The Crown* materialised, Granada d a short Paul Scott novel, *Stayin* in India, as a kind of pilot proje ground for the main extravaga two great stalwarts of the Briti screen, Trevor Howard and Ce *Staying On* was also filmed in " in Mashobra, Simla, and went hitch. It won considerable Johnson's performance and was sold to top television networks

The Jewel in the Crown— taken from the first of the four includes a distinguished cast of and television stars, notable amo great Shakespearean actress D Ashcroft, Rachel Kempson wh Vanessa Redgrave's mother and tor Saeed Jaffrey. The chief male role of the sinister Capt Ronald played by British actor Tim P lately seen in feature films like *Titans* and *Richard's Things*.

Perfect Part: Says Pigott-S appears in nine of the 14-hour-lo and is on Granada's rolls till th 1983, "Getting Merrick's part solute coincidence for me. Back when the novels first appeared called me up to say that he had with a perfect part for me. When myself I was convinced that I shou play Merrick. And now it turns actually am, years after I'd fanta it. Of course, being in the bigge duction to be put on in England responsibility. But I've loved ever the close on three months filming

An even greater responsibil have seemed to the producers to performers in coping with the rig alternately very hot and cold c least three members of the cast— including Dame Peggy Ashcroft 70 years of age, one reason perha production being accompanied b equipped ambulance and a doctor on all-hours duty. Says Dr Sudhir the Indian doctor in attendance:

Pictures by TEJBIR SINGH

Ashcroft and Geraldine James who plays Sarah Layton: turbulent saga

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st resilient members of the
e been the older members."
herself, the star of the show
role of Barbie Batchelor, a
ry type who has come to love
tirement which nonetheless is
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unity, loved being back in
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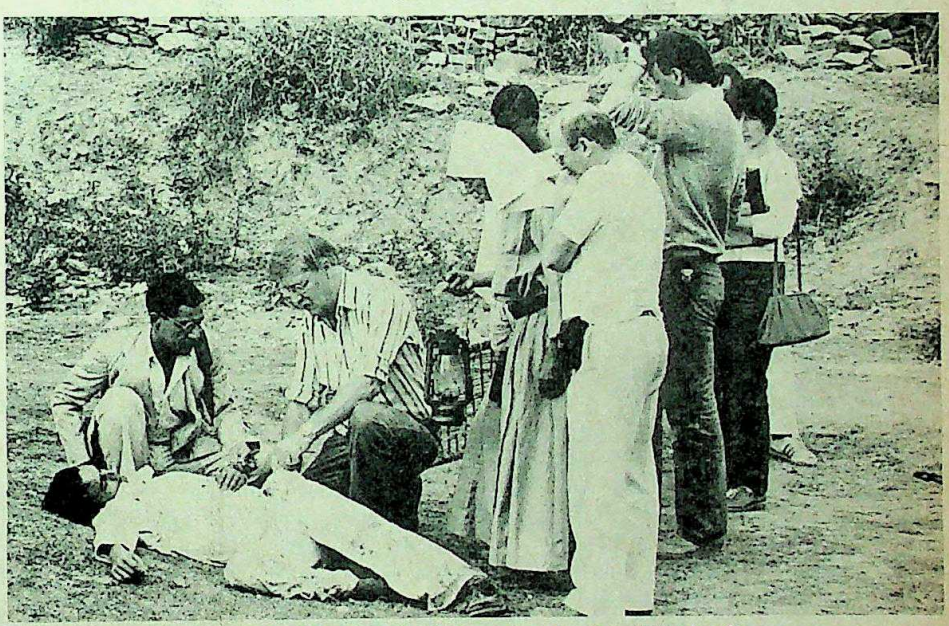
three years ago when James
ail Merchant cast her in a
ht caper for British television
he dissipating lavishness of
s called, absurdly enough,
oo of Bonny and Georgie's

d: That called for a shooting
than with Indian performers
na Sen and Victor Banerjee.
nchanted enough to long to
the grey-haired Ashcroft, re-
e and quick-witted for her 72
going strong night after night
e, "so when I overheard
Morahan talking into the tel-
e National Theatre one night
ect, I begged him to let me play
of course he did."
just one of the extraordinary
acters, British and Indian, no-
vented to populate his long and
ma about the last throes of
India. Set variously in small-
ments—inevitably the main
Pankot, Scott's greatest imag-
setting—and lakeside retreats,
and houseboats on the Dal
shmir, the saga of *The Raj*
n one level the story of the
y: their fate tied up inexorably
iny of British rule closing in
e enigmatic Daphne Manners,
irl who created a sensation by
an Indian called Hari Kumar;
roduced before her death; and
to the child of Anglo-Indian
various members of the British
In this saga of turbulent and
otion, Scott injected by way of
search, a degree of authentic
entation of the period.
always a slow but steady seller.
artet has regained popularity
death four years ago and also
critically regarded as a serious
the slow disintegration of the
on in India. Now as a major
al, which Granada hopes to sell
commercial slot for western
ernationally, it will in its small
romote India—not just as a
tion but, more important, as a
or foreign film-makers looking
tions.

—SUNIL SETHI in Simla

Wendy Morgan and Pigott-Smith in an emotional scene



Indian actor Om Puri (left) in a shot for *Jewel in the Crown*

Director Jim O'Brien and Ashcroft on location in Simla

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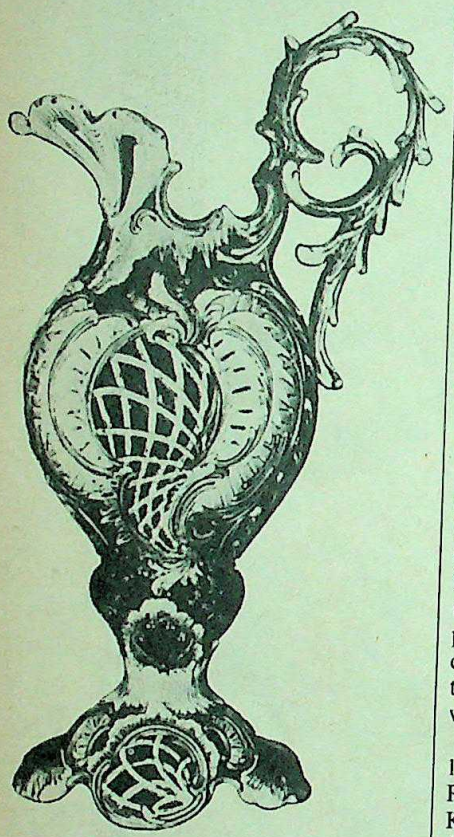

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Gulzar's Gamble

NAMKEEN
Written by Samresh Babu
Directed by Gulzar
Starring: Sanjeev Kumar, Waheeda Rehman, Sharmila Tagore, Shabana Azmi and Kiran Vairale

THE PROBLEM with making strongly anti-hero films on the Hindi screen is that somewhere along the line the director inevitably gives in to the dictates of reason and salvages his hero intact—the bottom line of commercialism will not allow any tampering with the well-worn male image of honourable machismo. But Gulzar is one of the few balance sheet conscious directors who can and does take risks. Never more tellingly than in *Namkeen*, his latest and possibly most successful and daring film.

In *Namkeen*, based on a story by Samresh Babu, Gulzar steps further out than he has ever done before. The theme is stark, straightforward, and surprisingly uninhibited. Almost theatrical in the way it moves, the film veers sharply from a simple, uncomplicated story about a family which falls collectively in love with its temporary tenant, to a near-morbid drama which is suddenly withdrawn.

Namkeen could well be supercharged 1980s' sequel to the Raj Kapoor-Waheeda Rehman starrer *Teesri Kasam* in which Kapoor makes an abortive effort to save a dancing-girl from the vagaries of her profession.

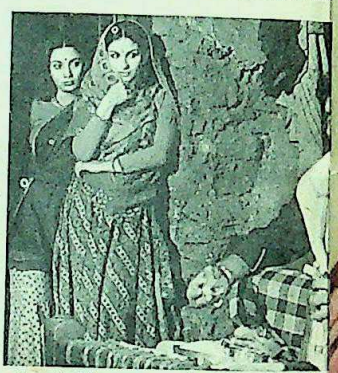
In *Namkeen,* Rehman is cast as an ex-dancer, mother of three marriageable daughters who is bent on keeping her daughters away from stage. Her husband, an impresario constantly on tour with a *nautanki* theatre group, on the other hand is equally determined to push the daughters into life under the bright lights.

Disciplined Daughters: Jyotiamma runs a strictly disciplinarian household, keeping her daughters Nimki (Sharmila Tagore), the mute Mithu (Shabana Azmi) and Lolita-like nymphet Chinki (Kiran Vairale) on a tight leash. Until, that is, Geru Lal (Sanjeev Kumar) comes into their lives. A truck-driver, who turns up in the Himachal village to drive for a construction project, Geru moves into Jyotiamma's crumbling house as a lodger.

Love gradually blossoms, but it remains infuriatingly unclear just who it is that Geru loves. The coy glances, flirtatious banter and romantic interludes are neatly divided to include all in the family, including Jyotiamma herself.

Eventually he takes non choosing instead to fade away in at the end of his trucking co promises of a quick return are and Geru sees nothing of the fa three years. Geru's callousness home to him with a bang wh Chinki doing a dance act for *nautanki* group.

Disappointing End: *Namk* almost morbid. Sanjeev Kum portrayed Geru returning to th only decay and corruption, and death hanging over its ruins though not necessarily wiser, him in the gloomy dak bungal him the story of the last three Mithu went mad and eventuall self by jumping off a cliff, Chinki sinking ship for the world her once renounced, and the mot away and died, unable to bear th



Azmi, Tagore and Kumar: stark

her family. Guilt-ridden, and to the thought of what he has brou Geru at movie's end salvages w and takes Nimki out of the mess his creation.

Far more than the darin Gulzar's superbly depicted brand that impresses. Locales are authe core, the casting impeccable and tion to detail unstinting. *Namk* carefully detailed down to electri hanging cobwebs from the crumbl The truck-driver, the paranoid m daughters and even bystanders i systematic development of charac ing into the dramatic exaggeratio tre, yet never losing their aura And it is here that Gulzar really sco is no gimmickry, little fancy cam the atmosphere established by glo ness, authentic lantern-lit sequen with stark simplicity of both the and the filming style, make it witho Gulzar's best film today.

—CHANDER UD

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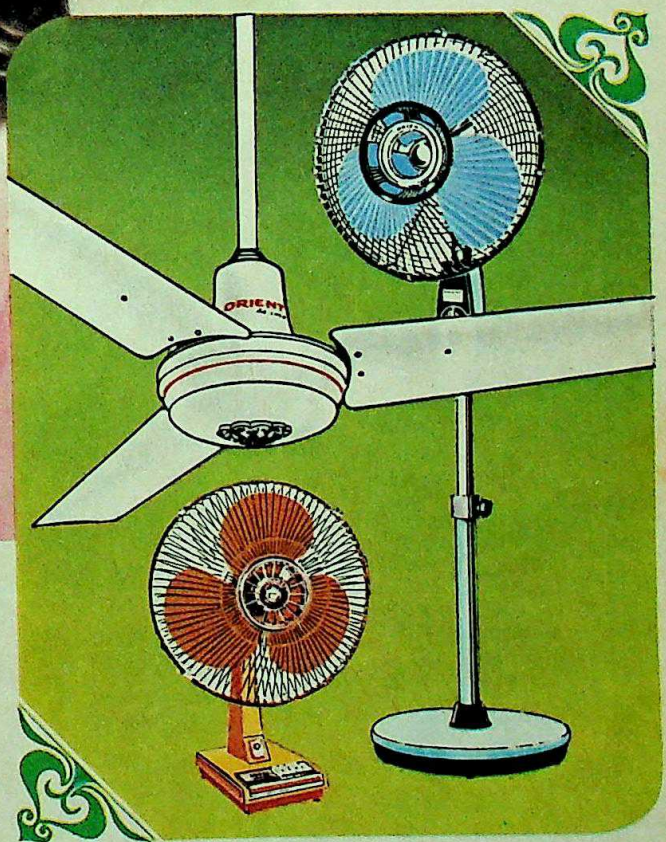

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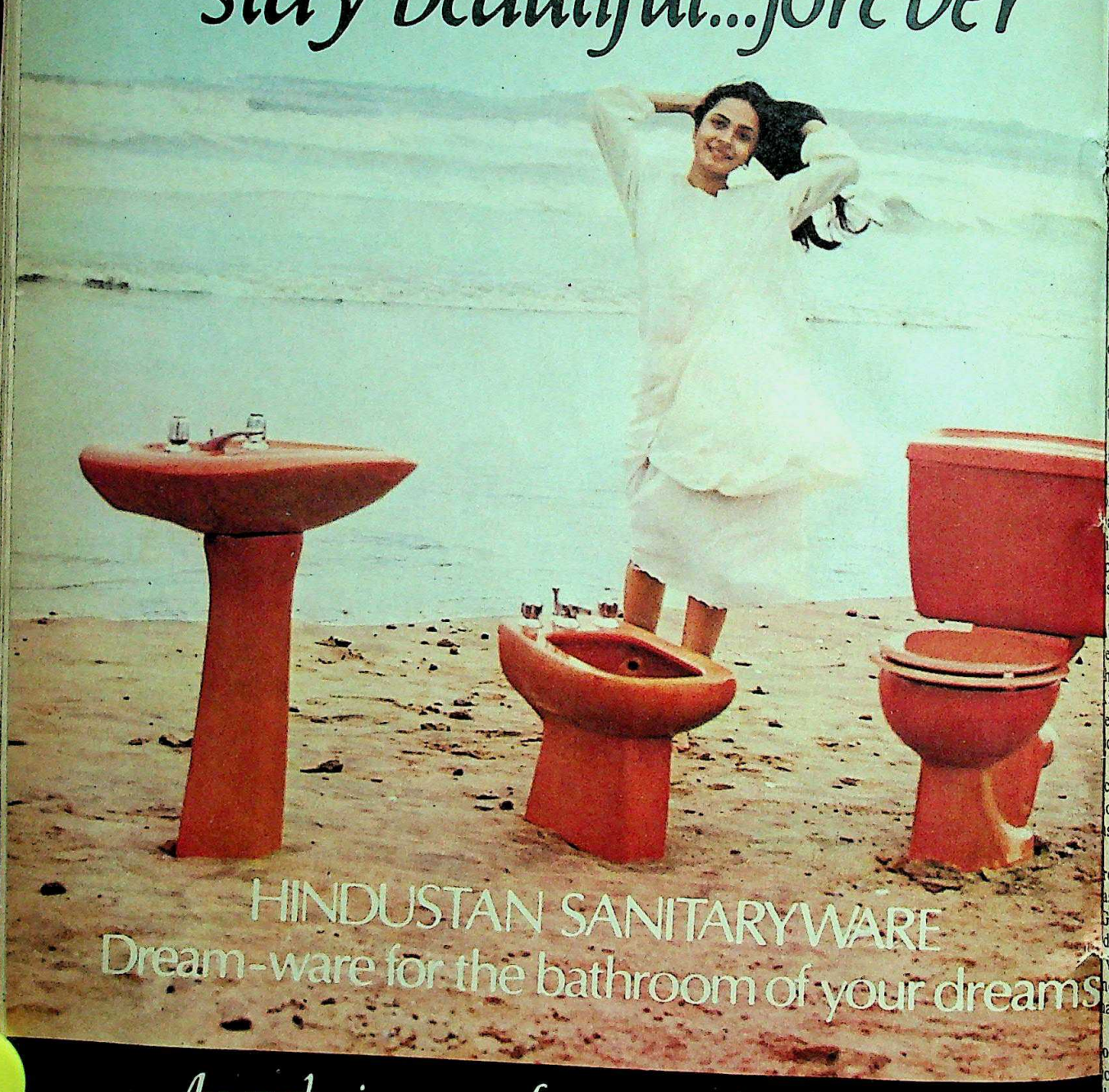

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TBATTEN AND THE
TITION OF INDIA
March 22–August 15, 1947
COLLINS and DOMINIQUE
LAPIERRE
Vikas
e: Rs 60; Pages: 191

LOUIS Francis Albert Victor Nicholas Mountbatten first came to India in 1921 as ADC to the then Prince of Wales (who later, as Edward VIII, abdicated the British throne). He had then thought: India was the most marvel- and the viceroy had the most ob. And he fantasised: What be to be viceroy!

rs later, his wife Edwina hap- t a famous crystal-gazer in Paris without knowing who she was: ting on a throne, a sort of royal ing with your husband."

rld War II commander and his ad to wait for another 16 years ir dream. When Clement Attlee, rime minister who was elected se that Britain would quit India. Mountbatten that dream job, bbed it—but only after ensuring everything he'd asked for.

helped Mountbatten the most ing George VI (father of the een) was his cousin who had dicrous confidence" in him. job was only to dismantle an ch was already on the verge of ot to build one. 'His Ex' claims s easy compared to India but, the relish and nostalgia with ecalls his 15 eventful months s India's last Viceroy and first eneral 25 years later, he clearly d time. The sensation of being viceroy was like "being endowed ost heavenly power. I realised I ade into the most powerful man

yant: Collins and Lapierre had on sessions with Mountbatten 1-73 while working on their best- edom At Midnight (60 million ortedly read it in 27 countries). d information from these inter- used in the earlier book. But, the 's tale in his own words appears t time in this book, the first in a series on the saga of India's

Mountbatten emerges in this volume as a pompous, vain, boastful and flamboyant character with an ego the size of Big Ben who claims all the credit for himself for the transfer of power. He speaks with a no-holds-barred kind of abandon and commits some delightful indiscretions ("Lady Wavell looked exactly like my wife's maid"). He claims that Nehru was jealous of him because he drew bigger crowds than Gandhiji and himself. He also claims that, after a heated argument he said to Vallabhbhai Patel: "You don't think I'm going to stay here and be pushed around by a chap like you, do you? I'm the Viceroy and you're a little upstart. If you think you can be rude to me and push me around, you're wrong."

His arrogance is incredible. Says he: "I'm the chap who can't go wrong, everybody else is wrong." He also admits: "What was bad for me, having been Supreme Commander and then Viceroy, I eventually got megalomania." Indeed, 'His Ex' deserves to get into the *Guinness Book of Records* as the greatest megalomaniac of the 20th century.

Nevertheless, it needs to be acknowledged that he is good copy. Tit-bits of import about the greats of that time, hitherto little known, can be found in plenty. Samples:

EXTRACTS

On Gandhi: "*He was like a little bird chirping. The time I brought him and Jinnah together they sat two yards apart and they couldn't hear each other. I had to push their chairs together... The level of his political advice was absolutely nonsensical.*"

On Nehru: "*Nehru always came and cried on my shoulder. He wanted someone to go back to. I had a sort of funny feeling that Nehru actually required my presence in order to be able to function, and after Gandhi it was me.*"

On Jinnah: "*A clot. A lunatic. He was absolutely, completely impossible. I have no worry about Jinnah being shown up for the bastard he was. ... He absolutely ensured the complete break-up of Pakistan. They're finished the day America withdraws her aid. I don't see how they (Pakistan) can survive. Even with an army, an air force, they'll be completely at the mercy of India.*"

On Krishna Menon: "*He actually got this invasion of Goa linked up without Nehru understanding or knowing about it and then faced him with a* fait accompli. *He destroyed Nehru... and later killed him with the disastrous Chinese war.*"

► Gandhiji was so desperate to avoid partition that he asked Mountbatten to make Jinnah the prime minister in Nehru's place if that helped.

► Mountbatten thought it best to split India into three parts instead of two. United Bengal was to have been the third. He had predicted to Rajaji, Pakistan's break-up within 25 years after partition.

► King George VI was keen on visiting India but Churchill wouldn't let him. He reportedly moaned: "It's said, I've been crowned Emperor of India without ever going to India. And I'm going to lose the title right here."

► Had Churchill been elected instead of Attlee, India's independence might have been delayed by a few years.

► Britain couldn't have carried on in India because they'd stopped recruiting for the Indian Civil Service (ICS) and the Indian Police in 1939.

► August 15 was chosen for transfer of power because on that day two years earlier the Japanese had surrendered to end World War II. Unhappily that day was unpropitious. On astrologers' advice Nehru suggested that just before midnight power be transferred, "and that will be all the more auspicious".

Controversial: Mountbatten is silent on one thing though: the much talked-about relationship between his wife ("she exuded absolute knock-down charm") and Nehru. In his controversial book on Mountbatten, his friend Richard Hough says that Edwina had a love affair with Nehru in 1947 and that this was a factor in Jinnah's insistence on the partition of India. Hough claims that Mountbatten knew about this "close and serious" relationship and condoned it.

Collins and Lapierre too are discreetly silent on this. Perhaps they said it all in this meaningful passage in their earlier book: "Women like Edwina Mountbatten were rare in the world and rarer still in the India of 1947. No one had been better able to draw Nehru from his shell when doubts and depression gripped him than the attractive aristocrat who radiated so much compassion, intelligence and warmth. Often, over tea, a stroll in the Moghul Gardens, or a swim in the viceregal pool, she had been able to charm Nehru out of his gloom, redress a situation and subtly encourage her husband's efforts."

Jinnah emerges as the villain of the show and the Pakistanis have already asked India to do something about this book because it contains "vituperative and foul language" about Jinnah. Nevertheless, this book is a must for all those who are interested in the modern history of the Indian subcontinent.

—S. VENKAT NARAYAN

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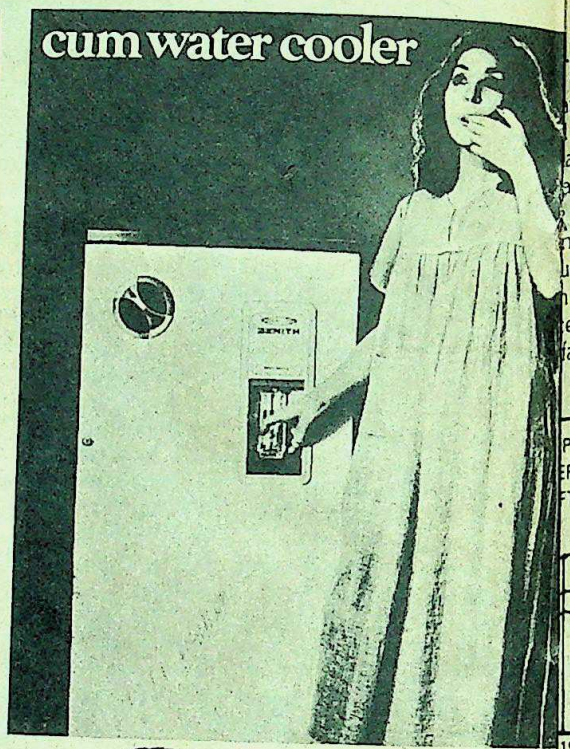

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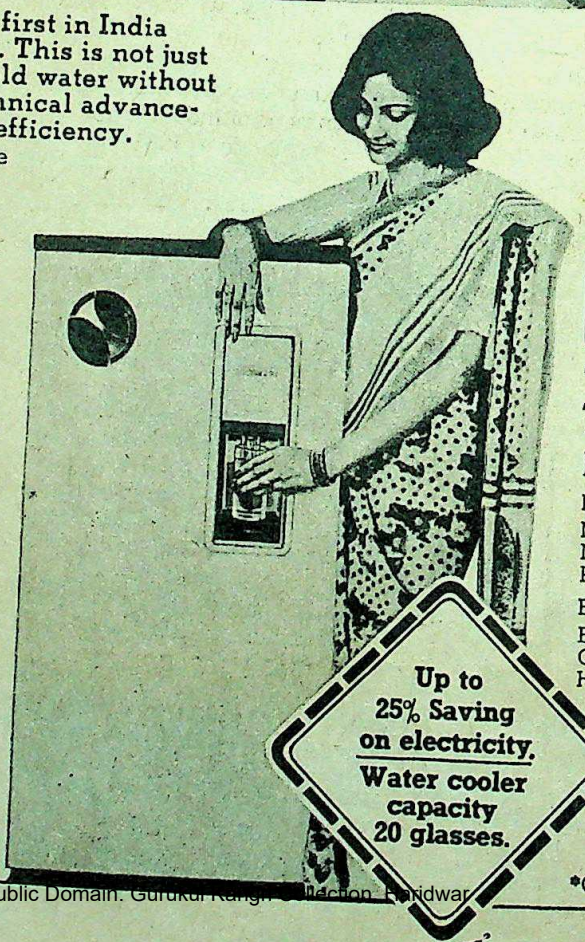

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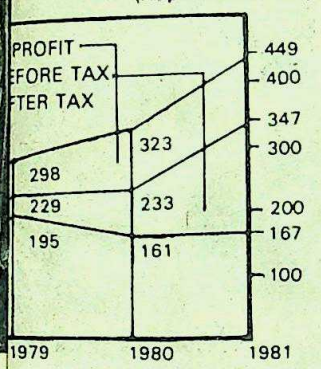
TING RESULTS

ny had a very successful . During the year, the arned a profit before tax akhs compared to Rs. 233 previous year—an nt of 48.92%. Viewed umber of adverse factors the economy, the e can be regarded as factory.

(Rupees in Lakhs)



oiler Plant about which I in my statement last year nto regular operation from 81 and this enabled us to dditional power to the MW. With this additional ad been possible for us to roductivity and efficiency extent. Based on the performance your are happy to recommend a dend at the rate of 18% deduction of tax.

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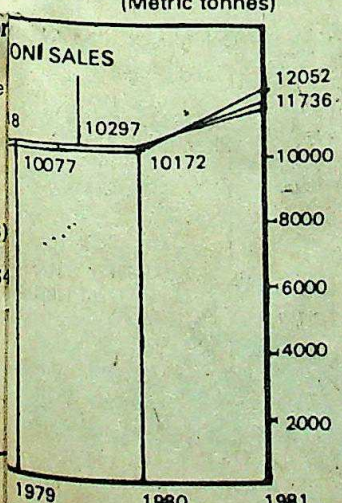
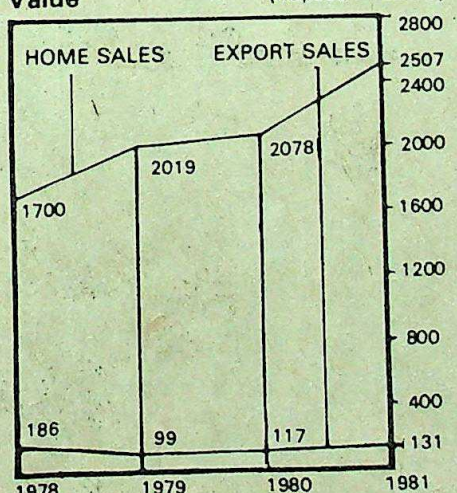


S Bhoothalingam

EXPORTS

Despite keen competition in overseas markets, the exports of the Company during the year were up by 12%. We are seriously engaged with the task of enlarging our share of overseas market both in traditional and non-traditional items and as matters stand now, we are hopeful about the future. You will, however, be glad to know that in this year also we received an Export Award from the Government of India for our export performance in 1981.

Value (Rupees in Lakhs)



PLANT MODERNISATION AND FACILITIES

In my report last year I referred to the modification work which started to modernise our plant. These modernisation steps were considered necessary with a view to making certain essential grades like high porosity paper for export market and insulating paper for domestic use. Some improvement in the matter of getting more uniform sheet, better formation and reducing the incidence of slime and lumps had already been seen in the installation of a new head box and approach flow system including fan pump and pressure screen in one of our machines. The modification process continued and we placed orders for four Disc Refiners, one hydrapulper and a number of other items including a computer for one of our machines. The installation of these are expected to be completed before the third quarter of the current financial year.

These modifications when completed will not only help improving the quality of our products but also will provide tremendous scope to maximise our operational efficiency.

TAXATION

The provision for taxation in 1981, as a percentage of profits before tax, is considerably higher compared to the previous year as the benefits arising out of tax concessions and reliefs did not acrue in the same proportion due to lower capitalisation.

EMPLOYEES

Industrial relations continued to be cordial. At all levels, the employees extended full co-operation to the Management and without whose contribution a highly successful 1981 could not have been possible. I would like to offer my sincere thanks to all of them and I am confident that our people, the basic strength in our Company, will continue to provide their whole-hearted co-operation in the accomplishment of many tasks that lie ahead of us. I would also like to thank my colleagues on the Board of Directors and in particular, the Managing Director for his excellent leadership and dedication in guiding the affairs of the Company successfully.

This does not purport to be a report of the proceedings of the Annual General Meeting

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Play

S I leading an Indian team
the international competi-
s or leading a herd of cattle?"
of bitter and pointed rhetoric,
captain of the Indian hockey
ced his decision to retire from
key last fortnight. His
arewell came when the Indian
Patiala at a training camp,
r the Champions Trophy
to be held in June in
Holland. The star player's
me on the heels of centre-
bir Singh Grewal's decision to
ternational arena, and was
veteran winger Maharaj
irement. Put together, the three
d up to the most damning
the state of India's national
eral and the Indian Hockey
HF) in particular.
combination that could have
he world, the Indian team has
nto a motley crowd of skill-less
e observer feels that only full-
enalty corner artist Rajinder
find a place in a world first
n the first twenty.
spects: Taken against the larger
what was once India's only gold
the prospects of India's "herd
Amsterdam appears to be of
nterest. The tournament is
the world's top six teams and
ed to find a berth because it
ifth place at the World Cup in

's decision to field a string of new
t pay any dividends. Among the
are Punjab inside-right Jagdeep
bay centre-half J. Carvalho,
nes right-winger Jalaluddin and
re-half S. Bara. Surinder Singh
over as captain in place of

fresh players a chance is all very
s doubtful whether the new look
be able to contain marauders
arlesworth of Australia and Ties
olland. And against a Pakistani
e in full cry—Samiullah, Man-
an Sardar, Hanif Khan, Kalee-
en the best back line can falter.
rial: For this deplorable state of
blame lies not so much on the
on the IHF which appears to be
d. Said Surjit Singh: "We are
und at every stage, insulted and
by those who know little hockey
and none of the finer points of the game." He also said that IHF President Inder Mohan Mahajan was dictatorial and liked only "yes-men". In fact, Mahajan has been coming under fire for quite some time now, for the sacking of Bhaskaran, who led India to an Olympic gold medal in Moscow in 1980, for skipping important tournaments and for trouble-ridden training camps which resulted in a number of walk-outs by players for one reason or another.

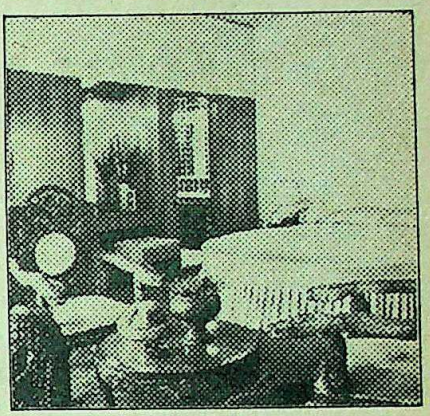
Last fortnight, the controversy over IHF affairs took a serious turn when the Secretary of the Rajasthan Hockey Association, Harnek Singh, alleged at a news conference that Mahajan had flagrantly flouted IHF rules and had not summoned the federation's annual general meeting for two years despite repeated requests. There are also other allegations of financial irregularities. Says Mati Lal former IHF treasurer who resigned last fortnight: "None of these transactions form official accounts of the federation."

The players complain that even the meagre amount of foreign exchange they are entitled to on tours abroad is sometimes not

Surjit Singh and Mahajan: whose fault?

forthcoming. A member of the Indian World Cup team says: "Hockey officials spend money like lords but we don't get enough money for our expenses." Another player who went to Europe says: "We used to get foreign exchange which was not enough even for our laundry charges. But our officials had enough foreign exchange for shopping." Mahajan refused to comment, and said: "I will place my views in the executive meetings. I have nothing to hide. I can account for each and every paisa spent by me."

But the players who have done thankless duty for India are not very impressed. Says Surjit Singh: "If the present situation continues, there will be no good players in this country. Even now, with 685 million people, it is a matter of shame that we don't have more than two players for each position." He adds: "I would advise youngsters in India not to play hockey as there is no future in it. They should rather play cricket. I myself have spent a lifetime in hockey but have got nothing out of it. The politics in hockey has ruined it." The stench can no longer be ignored.



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SHALIMA

The Indian link in chain

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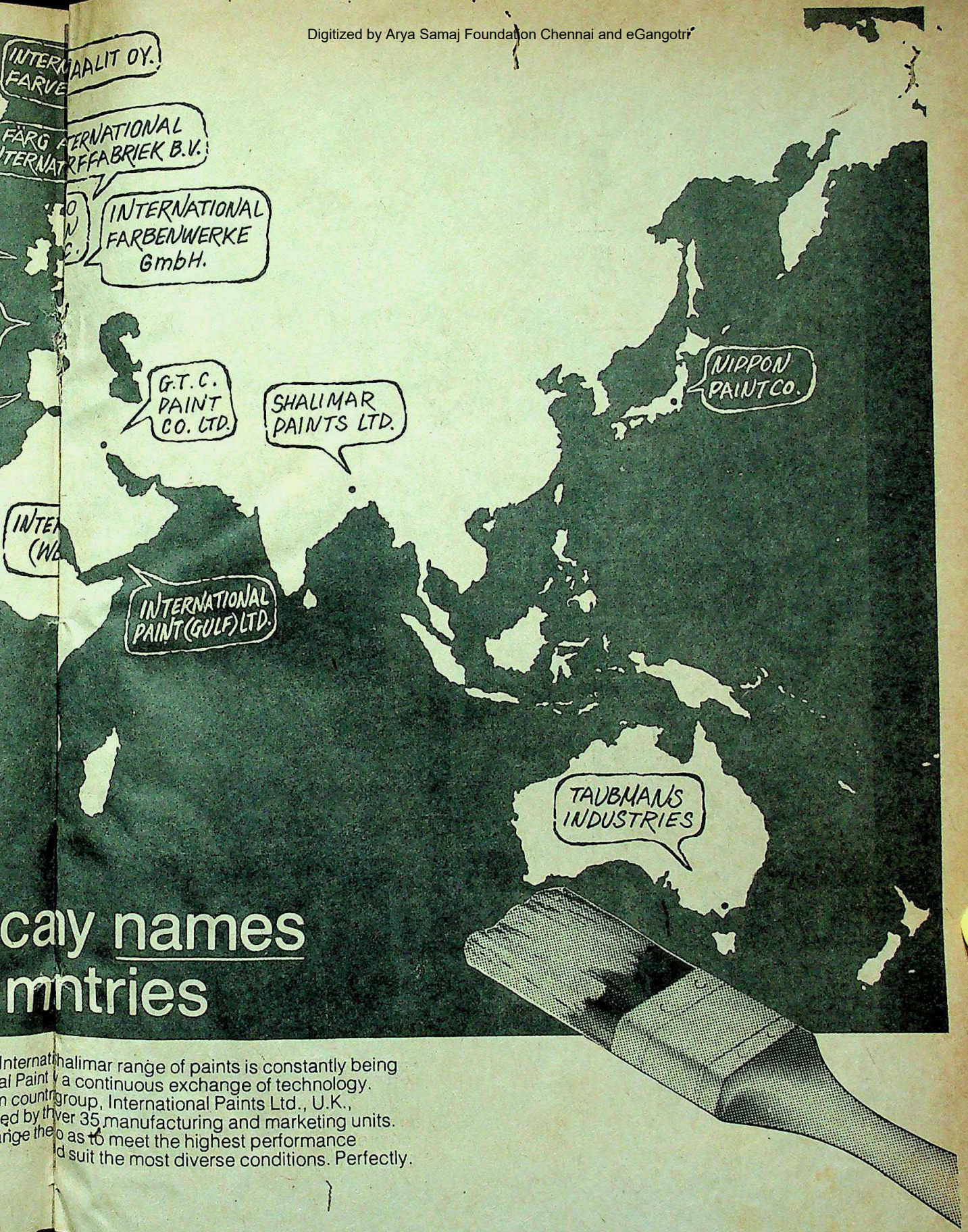

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■ For fading actress **Yogeeta Bali** and filmland's answer to John Travolta, **Mithun Chakraborty,** both 26, it is to be the culmination of a torrid, live-in, love-in affair, that has lasted through four long years and probably busted both their previous short-lived marriages. Taking the plunge after a period of vacillation, coupled with star tantrums at home, the pair have decided to get married in July. Said the coy, blushing bride-to-be in real filmy style: "*Baat pakki ho gai hai.* We'll be married here in Bombay in July."

Both Chakraborty and Bali emerged out of wrecked marriages—he to a Gujarati theatre starlet Helena Luke and she to singing superstar Kishore Kumar. Kumar has since tied the knot with one-time screen siren Leena Chandravarkar and produced a child. The buxom Bali, who was still acting during her marriage to Kumar proposes to give up all that for blissful domesticity. Said she: "I was never very ambitious and I wouldn't like to work anyway. I am going to be a housewife." Considering her fast-receding career it's easy to see why.

HARISH DAFTARY/STARDUST

Bali and Chakraborty: tying the knot

■ Being her most unabashed admirer, London-based industrialist **Swraj Paul** is ideally suited to be Mrs Gandhi's most effective public relations man in Britain. But being a high-profile personality, Paul is hardly averse to giving himself a bit of a plug in the bargain. His biggest opportunity arrived during the Festival of India opening last March which was inaugurated by Mrs Gandhi and Margaret Thatcher. Never one to miss an opportunity, Paul trotted obediently at Mrs Gandhi's heels wherever she went and made sure a photographer was around to preserve the moments for posterity. The result has been a glossy full-colour tabloid which could easily have been part of the Paul family album but is instead the international edition of the *Daily Milap* printed in London and featuring colour pictures of the Paul clan with assorted celebrities including Mrs Thatcher, Prince Charles, James Callaghan, Sonia and Mrs Gandhi. The best picture was one of the Pauls with Mrs Gandhi and Sonia (above) for which the heart-rending caption read: "The Paul family has made a lot of sacrifices for keeping the image of India high and lively in Britain."

The Paul family with Mrs Gandhi and Sonia: loyal admirers

■ The battle of the bulge is over. Last fortnight, the undisputed heavyweight champion of Parliament, **Piloo Mody,** surrendered his title without putting up much of a fight to **Vishwanath Prithvijit Singh,** the newly-inducted Congress(I) Rajya Sabha MP from Maharashtra, who outweighs Mody by quite a few kilos. Waiting for the bout outside Parliament House, a safari-suited Mody quipped: "So

Mody (left) and Singh: the heavyweight stakes

BHAWAN SINGH

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ferring to Singh wh
for the encounter.
Singh finally eased h
of the car with co
help from his aides
ing prayer beads, M
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Both members ref
ulge their respective
Mody couldn't resist
"It's a state secret".

SIGN POS

■ **Died:** Rajni P
Congress(S) leader an
lawyer of cancer of t
Bombay. A former fre
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Middle Temple and w
president of the India
Cambridge, England

■ **Died:** Mohanlal
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lying in a state of co
year, following a road
in Calcutta.

■ **Life Imprisonmen**
ternational racketeer
Sobhraj and Canadian
Marie Andre Leclerc
murder of an Israeli
1976. Sobhraj has bee
out of jail since July 1
his dramatic arres
Indian police.

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